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THE MANIAC'S CONFESSION,

A FRAGMENT OF A TALE.

BY

J. W. SIMMONS,

Author of the Exile's Return.

Dark Spirits are abroad—and gentle Truth,
Within the narrow house of death—is laid,
An early tenant. Miss BAILLIE.

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TO

BENJAMIN R. GREENLAND, M.D.

THIS TALE

IS INSCRIBED,

BY

HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

The Exile's Return, the Author's first production, having been passed "sub silentio" by the critics, for reasons best known among themselves, he cannot be supposed again to publish, in consequence of any literary patronage, which has been extended him, but simply, because he prefers a clear type to an obscure manuscript. The numberless typographical errors to be met with in the abovementioned Poem, together with the desire the Author feels of expunging certain lines, very defective, and of substituting others in their place, will induce him, in justice to his own feelings, to republish it some time hence; whether these proposed amendments may prove for the better, it will not be for the Author to determine. There is one remark relative to the Exile's Return, he begs leave to make, which is, that "the ingredients," were *not* "caught from Maturin's Bertram," as a writer in the Charleston Patriot observed, and upon an attentive reading, it would seem impossible that any one should have formed that

opinion. However willing the Author may be to admire the genius of Maturin, he certainly does not think worthy of imitation, those disgusting illustrations of the perverted principles of his moral Creed, that are found to darken the pages of his every work. Flavian, though no doubt as much "a man of wo" as Bertram, is no gross sensualist however, no murderer of the innocent husband of an innocent woman, innocent but for that same murderer, no vile ingrate to the very being whom he pretended to love, no hair-brained enthusiast, who in a gush of phrenzy commits "self slaughter," boasting that he died no "felon death." Bertram is accidentally shipwrecked near the Castle of Aldobrand, his enemy—is rescued by its inmates from destruction, whose humanity and kind offices he returns with scorn, because forsooth, they happened to be "*men*," imploring them to replunge him in the waves, as in that case, the sin would "be on *their* heads and not his," wishing, it would seem, that they should entail upon themselves responsibility for *his* fate, and that too in *obliging* him; here we have the language of confirmed *misanthropy*, and not of revenge as directed against some particular *individual*—and this morbid spirit of unfounded hostility, unfounded because general, levels its shafts of venom indiscriminately—the outlaws with whom, through motives of wild policy, he chose to league himself, he afterwards, when having at

his pleasure withdrawn himself from their fraternity, they become no longer subservient to his purposes, inveighs against in the most contemptuous language, because they *were* outlaws—choosing to forget what he himself had but lately been—the very woman, for whom at one moment he makes such a display of affection, at another, he reviles in bitterest invective, stigmatising her name with every opprobrious epithet, and wherefore? Why, because, after a lapse of many years, when she might well have supposed him lost to her, "to save a famishing father," she marries a man, whom though she may not have loved, she must have respected, because he was virtuous, and to whom she must have felt grateful, because he was fond of, and cherished her; but Bertram, does not choose to listen to any thing that she may have to say, in her own defence—no—though herding with the very refuse of society, still she should have regarded him as "a thing of light;" though dead, at least to her, she should have been wedded to his memory—though a father's life depended upon her uniting herself with Aldobrand, she should rather have seen that father perish, than insult the spirit of her departed lover, by bestowing her hand upon the man it hates—well, for these weighty reasons, he pronounces upon her the blessing of his curse, and the curse of his blessing, hopes that her child may "stab her with its smiles:"—a keener malediction never was im-

plored—that she may become the mark against which the hand of scorn may point its finger, loathsome in life, and sleepless even in the grave; and to top this catalogue of evils, which he himself has framed as destined to await her, he wantonly and fiendishly triumphs over the picture of her depravity and misfortunes, by maliciously lulling her into a criminal connection, and then spurns her for her infidelity—now, however willingly the author would imbibe the spirit of Maturin's *beauties*, he feels assured that no defects of the nature of those he has just enumerated—whatever others may exist—are to be found in the pages of the Exile, consequently, there can be no imitation; for, as these are *inherent* defects of *character*, of the inward man, not such as the dramatist alone conceives him, but as he may be found in living nature—diseased traits of mind, given birth to in prominent passions that characterise the hero of the Tragedy, the careful delineation of which is the peculiar business of the Poet, and whose influence and progress tend to individualise the drama—we say, that as these are frailties of the natural character, which however disgusting, constitute the most striking lineaments of the picture, with which we are presented in the Play—if the agency of the same moral elements be not found to be employed in the poem—Flavian cannot be said to bear any marked resemblance to Bertram—and that *such*

agency has *not* been made use of—the author, who may be allowed to know *something* of his own design, takes upon him to assert—the outlines indeed of the two characters may correspond in some measure, as the faces of those fabled Sisters, which are described as being so much alike, that at a distance, each was taken for the other, but when narrowly examined, were found to be totally dissimilar—and as to any *general* correspondence of features, we observe the same almost daily in men differently constituted notwithstanding, the very structures of their minds may somewhat resemble one the other, while no two men at the same time have ever been discovered to be perfectly alike; one might as well say, that Milton's hero was copied from the Grecian Achilles, because both are drawn with high and martial qualities, as pronounce Flavian the counterpart of Bertram, because, like the latter, he is represented as actuated by feelings of *revenge*. Zanga is as unlike Iago, or Fitzharding, as Falstaff differs from Macbeth, yet the principle of action is the same in the Revenge as it is in Othello, and the Curfew: but without detailing examples, it may be observed, that the great fundamental principles of human nature are the same in all men, and that those shades of contrast, which mark the several individuals of the same species, are the result of various contingencies—were this not the case, all the heroes of

the Epic Fable—from Homer down to Cumberland, might claim affinity so striking, one with the other, as to create a general identity. We have said perhaps much more than the occasion called for, or the importance of the subject demanded—but really, unless an Author now then presume, in self-defence, to oppose the pompous judgment of the critic, such is the peculiar and happy complacency of the latter, that, if let alone, he will not unfrequently endeavour to persuade a writer, contrary to his senses, that he meant one thing, when he designed another; Voltaire is said to have indited a fearful critique upon the Lusiad, afterwards confessing he had never read it; and Addison ridicules with much fancied pleasantry, Sylvia's speech to the Flowers, in the Aminta of Tasso, as an instance of bad taste in the Italian writers, without having been acquainted, as Dr. Blair remarks, either with the original or the translation of that performance. "Of all the cants that are canted in this canting world," says the author of the Sentimental Journey—"though the cant of the Hypocrite be the worst, the cant of Criticism is the most disgusting."

In speaking as we have done of the tragedy of Bertram, we would not be understood as affecting to undervalue it as a *performance*—on the contrary, we cannot but entertain the highest admiration for those extraordinary powers of the writer, which have enabled

him to do justice to such a character, while we abhor the character itself—is it no fault of Mr. Maturin's that his hero is stern, savage, and relentless—the error lies in *nature*, that is if *probability* be allowed to be the standard of poetical invention—this is a reflection not often made.

The Fragment that ensues—was written shortly after the publication of the Exile's Return, at the commencement of the Author's twentieth year; the Observations upon Poetry and the Drama, and American Literature, were also written some months previous to the Author coming of age—he does not mention this circumstance as tending to *apologise* for their very imperfect execution; apologies are but awkward things at best, and for which the Author has no predilection whatever—those who may think it worth their time to read them, will no doubt find much to censure.

Philadelphia, March, 1821.

THE MANIAC'S CONFESSION,

A FRAGMENT OF A TALE.

THERE is a fever of the soul,
A cureless malady that preys
Upon the heart, upon the brain,
That riots in each bursting vein,
And quick diffusing o'er the whole,
Of ardent frames—more surely slays
Than arquebus or atagan—
When man in fight oppos'd to man,
Meets death in ev'ry winged blow,
Dealt by the fervour of his foe.

* * * * * * *

It is that heated glow of mind,
That loves to revel in the wild

Of its own worlds—with power to bind
The victim of its phantasy,
In fetters of such varied hue,
As mocks the tongue that feign would tell
The magic of its miracle;
Glittering chains at first, whose light
Disorders and deceives the sight;
Refusing still to pour the beam,
Which might dissolve the fatal dream;
As shadows melt before the ray,
That heralds the approach of day.

* * * * * * *

It is a dark and fatal spell,
That doth uncharnel its own hell—
Too vainly late from him to fly,
Who hath been made its ministry—
It is the curse that mars the life
And beauty of this nether sky,
And wages an eternal strife
With all who spurn its potency—
It is the blast that blights the heart,

And ev'ry blossom of its bloom,
Its chill and black'ning ne'er depart,
Until the substance they consume—
Whereon they feed—until the tomb
Hath clos'd upon the sufferer's head,
For there is quiet 'mong the dead.
This visitation never fails
To visit they that least can bear
The after shock that still prevails,
The rankling of the wounds that tear,
Enfeebling ev'ry fiber'd nerve,
Until their functions fail to serve;
And then they wind into the core,
To riot there for ever more!

* * * * * * *

Thou Soul of softness—wing'd with fire,
Thine are the powers that conspire
To dazzle yet to torture life,
Whose stern afflictions ever rife
To feeling's fineness—dash the bowl

Of brief enjoyment with a drop,
Whose poison weighs upon the soul—
Until it wastes—without the prop
Of one reflection, that can bring
A balm to 'suage the mortal sting,
Which, like to Scorpion, wounds the breast,
The very source within whose rest
Was nurtur'd first the venom'd bane
That doth inflict an age of pain—
Bought by a moment's fleeting joy;
When Fancy loves to play the boy;
Dazzled with some glittering toy,
It seeks to win the splendid prize,
And weeps to find it fled its eyes.

* * * * * * *

Oh! who can tell—save he whose heart
Hath reel'd in fullness 'neath the glow,
The pressure of those lava worlds,
That circumfuse o'er ev'ry part
Of the warm blood—whose currents flow,
Delerious from the source that hurls

Its boiling waves of tortured light,
Howling and hissing in the might
Of their disorder'd powers—who
Save he—can tell what 'tis to feel,
That the first breath of life we drew,
Breath'd frenzy's taint from out the hell
Of our own souls—whereon the seal
Of the eternal curse was set.
The source of ills that once befell,
The ancestry of they who yet
Are doom'd to feel the woes *they* felt,
To own the agony that knelt
Before the Eternal throne to plead
Some respite from the inward throes,
That burnt the heart, and then that froze
The very blood within the vein,
In interchance of varied pain.

* * * * * * *

The winds are loud upon the lake,
That hurls its waves of sheeted blue,

'Gainst billowy clouds whose bosoms shake
With the eternal thunder's roar:
And far around the light'nings strew
Destruction's splinters with a dash,
That dams the waters—and a flash,
That bears a naked world of wide
And dismal waste—Look back! the tide
Comes thund'ring in redoubled might,
To reassert its ancient right,
And seek the channel whence its course,
Had fled in terror from the force
Of the giant Storm that wrapt in night,
Swept hideous upon the might
Of iron pennons—o'er the deep
It hurls tremendous—now its sweep
Hath reach'd the mountain wilds that stand,
Like guardian spirits of the land,
Pillar'd on their unbending base,
Immortal in the wing'd race
Of Time, alone in majesty,

They view the course of things that die,
The shadows of the world that pass,
In one disorder'd varied mass,
Beneath their brow—yet still the same,
These flourish in immortal fame.
Amid the storm sublime they rear
Their shadowy front, and waving height,
Reechoing the madden'd air,
Pregnant with such sounds of fear
As well accorded with the night.

* * * * * * *

The storm is hush'd, the winds are laid,
Gloom and silence now pervade
The scene which late the tempest shook.
And save the moan of the gust that swells,
From out the hollowness of distant dells,
There's not a sound in earth or air,
But stillest bubbling of the brook,
And the boughs that fitfully wave on high.
Chanting their wild and midnight melody.

* * * * * * *

There is a power in the Elements,
To stir the soul to noblest thought:
And when the terror of the tempest vents,
Itself around, as though it caught,
The majesty of Him who gave
Its might unto the wing'd wave,
The giant mountain—and the wild,
Of the cloud embosom'd forest;
We feel unearthly, as the child
Of Nature, and her very wrath
Is beautiful—along her path
We move mysteriously blest;
And converse hold with shapes of air,
A peopled infinite, for there,
In pathless wood and silent shore—
Are beings terrible and fair,
Such as the heart for ever more,
May dwell upon, and ceaseless pore
O'er recollections of the past,
When we were wanderers of the vast

And unprun'd wild—ere step of man,
Profan'd the awful and the grand
Of Nature's own primeval plan.
When e'en the shrub, the wave, the strand,
Bore impress of that mystic hand,
That stampt sublimity on all
The world's wide garden—ere the fall,
Of erring man from his estate
Of envied greatness—threw the pall,
Of misery and littleness
O'er human Nature's heretage.
Disease and death, the woes that press,
And grind to very nothingness
Full many a noble heart, which yet
Had else been purg'd from ev'ry taint
That mars it now—and doth beget
The sorrows that impose restraint
Upon the wings that fain would soar
To noblest flights, but which no more

Can spread their anxious pennons now,
'Neath fallen greatness' yoke we bow
Like prostrate captives at the car
Of some imperial God of war.

* * * * * * *

What step is heard upon a night,
Whose depth of darkness might affright,
The very forms that cleave the clouds,
Whose midnight sableness enshrouds
Their mystic meetings from the eye
Of the hush'd world—that would descry
The strife of fiends, the glare of hell,
Their frantic laugh and hideous yell?
No mortal step it sure can be,
But some infernal Deity—
That dares walk forth at this dread hour,
When Nature sleeps, yet tempests lour—
A *human* form by ev'ry fear,
That blackens in impending air!

What doth it here alone and dark,
More terrible than all—but hark!
Mysterious accents, broken, wild,
Like hollow winds in cavern-tomb,
Where cabin'd-cribb'd, confined in gloom,
Their yawning moans come fitfully
Through dreariness of space—a child
Of with'ring woes must sure be he.
And now his step hath gain'd the verge
Of yon steep precipice—the surge
Heaves darkly boiling from below,
To him there's music in its flow;
For there he listens, and he stands
With fixed eye and clasped hands;
Like one wrapt in a spell-born dream
He gazes on that sable stream—
A long and hideous trance I ween,
To mortal of so wreck'd estate:
Though seeming his unconsciousness,
Yet thought is busy, forms are seen

No other eye but his can see;
And there he stands, and seems to bless
Some phantom-form in his caress,
And now in joy he seems elate,
And now again comes agony—
A deep o'erwhelming tide of wo
Seems urging him to leap below—
Why doth he pause—to one unblest,
That wave affords the surest rest;
And yet he lingers—now away—
He speeds like one whom long delay
Hath startled into memory,
Of something he had forgot,
Away he speeds—but who or what
This human spectre form can be?
His life seems wrapt in mystery.

* * * * * * *

He sudden came, as sudden past,
As gloomy as the desert blast,

A youthful form erect and tall,
And wrapt within a dungeon pall;
His fett'ring chains were heard to sound,
As clanking loose upon the ground;
A moment more in suddenness
He grasp'd them with a phrenzied look,
Which did betray an eagerness,
To hush the sounds that lately shook,
Dark wretch! as though the passive night—
Could listen or oppose his flight—
But he collected them in care,
And glanc'd around his hagard eyē,
Which did betray the wildest fear
Of some approaching treachery:
And then as if by death pursued,
He rush'd—but paus'd—an instant stood,
Then sullen stalk'd—as though his blood
Indignant rose, he strode away,
Night fled with him—and rose the Day.

* * * * * * *

A lovelier light ne'er lit the sky
Than that which now beam'd tranquilly
Upon the City's glitt'ring Spires;
A golden flood of living fires
Stream'd broad upon the Mountain's brow,
And circling form'd a radiant bow,
Whose dazzling glories shed below,
Above, around, a genial glow,
That lit all hearts to love and life
Within that busy city's strife;
A checquer'd scene of many cares,
Of many pleasures, many tears;
But Grief's a solitary guest,
And while the Mass of joys possest,
Float gayly o'er life's smiling sea,
The with'ring shade of Misery
Ne'er throws a damp upon the scene,
Or clouds the laughing Sun serene,
Of libertine Prosperity;
Merit pines within the shade,

And Virtue droops for want of aid;
In many a hard extremity,
Sorrow sheds its secret tear,
Within the city wan Despair
Is often seen to stalk alone,
While gayly sounds the general tone
Of festive mirth and revelry;
At height of noon the peopled street
Is often trod by naked feet,
And unhous'd heads and unfed sides,
The city's splendid pomp derides;
For still the Mass brush gayly by,
Nor pause to pity they that lie
Along their path—or darkly die,
The children of adversity.
And yet 'tis justice to aver,
That though the many, 'mid the stir
Of eager haste and duty's call,
Feel not the wound that silent winds

Into the solitary heart,
Where neither tie of nature binds,
Or friendship's sympathy impart
A feeling that may mourn the fall
Of that it lov'd—yet still they feel,
And deeply, when the general weal
Of the moral world is clog'd by crime,
Or sour calamity in any shape,
Call it self-love, or what you may,
Yet still the multitude betray
Solicitude in peril's time,
Though even then some idly gape,
And heedless pass what other eyes
Behold with tend'rest sympathies;
But still the greater number far
Are subject to the shocks that jar
The feeling frame—at sight or sound
Of guilty deeds—impelled by fear,
Ambition—phrenzy—whatsoe'er

Can sway the soul to acts of blood—
And such afforded now its food,
To nurse the appetite of they
Whom deeds of terror ne'er betray
To Nature's holiest charity;
The tear that flows from Pity's mine,
The little all of Misery—
From Splendour's minions more divine
Than glories of ancestral line;
Ay—words are waxing wild and wide
Throughout that city's far domain,
That seem to quell awhile its pride,
Restoring Nature's reign again;
Words that breathe of some dark deed,
The trembling spirit fears to heed,
And pale the lip and sad the eye
Of they who pass in silence by
The stranger whom they frequent meet,
Yet without liberty to greet;

And echo back the tidings wild,
That seem to startle e'en the child,
As resting on its mother's heart;
And well may child and mother start—
It is a tale that sure must freeze
The current of its purple seas,
And spread the pall of dunnest night
Upon that guilty city's light.

* * * * * * *

Oh God! 'tis fearful sight to see
The desert of a ruin'd mind,
The wreck that Memory leaves behind,
When she takes flight on wing of fire,
And leaves a blacken'd mass to be
The all that tells of heaven's ire;
To mark the lip of infancy,
Without its bloom of purple light,
The wildness of the unconscious eye,
Without its beam of cherub glow,

But flame that breathes of inward night,
And desolation's work below—
The hectic of so young a cheek,
And the faint veins that sadly streak,
Its passive langour, like the bloom
That haunts the flowret of the tomb,
As soft—as melancholy fair—
Caught from its with'ring death bed there,
The doubtful tinge that mantles o'er
All that was beautiful before.

* * * * * * *

The worm that feeds upon the leaf,
Is veiled in fulness of perfume,
Till stampt with an eternal grief,
That bud betrays the settled doom
That early mark'd it for the tomb;
And Oh! to view each darker day
Returning, waft its hues away
In solitary—still decay,
Each wasting hour with it bring
The blast that blights its early spring,

Till hue, and bloom, and beauty fled,
'Tis left to wither on its dreary bed:
The source whence first its beauteous head
Waved richness to the winged gale,
But rifled now its morning bloom,
No gentle breeze to breath its tale,
It silent meets its certain doom.

* * * * * * *

So falls the Son of sterner fate,
Dark victim of eternal Hate,
The phial of whose wrath was pour'd
Upon the heads of they that first
Incur'd the weight of woes that hoard
Their mountain for the wretch accurst,
Who stands hereditary heir
To all his fated *sire* bore:
A living monument of fear,
A few brief seasons winged o'er,
He rears his blasted front on high,
The terror of each passing eye.

And wherefore is *he* made to feel
The rank'ling of so deep a wound?
His breast is not a breast of steel,
But pierce its core the blood will bound;
His soul is free from taint of sin,
And is as clear as it hath been.
'Tis sooth that his dead ancestry
May have incurr'd the wound withal,
They darkly bled and died—but why
Must chilling Mis'ry's dunnest pall
Descend from sire unto son?
The crimes of many wreak'd on one—
Why must the guiltless bear the doom
That sweeps them to the guilty's tomb?
The very woes that press'd the heart
Of they who played a dam'ning part,
Are visited in equity,
As canting bigots meekly lie—
Upon the head of innocence,

A dismal change effecting thence,
That leaves of life but twilight sense.

* * * * * * *

The weary Sun hath sunk to rest—
Beneath the Mountain's shadowy brow
He slowly sinks into the West,
But leaves behind a summer glow,
That tells of his bright presence fled,
Hesperian hallo of the dead.
Twin-born with Silence—Twilight waves
Her dewy mantle o'er the scene,
In the blue Deep her form she laves,
And noiseless as a dream appears;
Her cherub eye suffus'd in tears,
She pensive glides along the green
Of far extended plains between,
And sheds her balmy presence o'er
The land that Phœbus parch'd before;
Upon her virgin brow a Star
Is softly seen to shine afar,

As if his pensive vigil there
Was meant to guard a world so fair;
Enamour'd of her loveliness,
He lives but in her fond caress,
And when she meekly bids adieu
To all the world—her Lover too—
Sleepless near the spot he mourns,
Like early Love at Mem'ry's shrine,
But oft again *her* form returns,
And oft renew their joys divine:
Not thus in fleeting life's young day,
When mingling hearts delight to blend,
Our promis'd joys, once passed away,
Do ne'er return their light to lend.

* * * * * * *

There is a voice of deepest wail,
That fitfully upon the gale
Comes—hushing ev'ry sound beside,
In depth of its agony's tide—
At times 'tis lull'd—and then again,
It wakes in Sorrow's loudest strain,

What Spirit on an eve like this
Should breathe its woes 'mid so much bliss,
As woos around the softest kiss,
From ev'ry flowret and leaf,
That wontons in the laughing breeze?
As gayly 'mid the clust'ring trees,
It snatches joy rich, but brief
As Her's I ween—poor child of grief,
Whose misery would seek relief,
In venting thus the inward throes,
Which tell at every pausing close,
How keen they search that bosom 'mid its woes.
'Tis Woman's voice—for soft, though deep,
The accents on the gale that sweep—
'Tis Her—that city's boasted pride,
Young Lora—destin'd Osma's bride—
Osma—man of doubtful fate,
Whom it were well if thou didst hate;
But where is he, thy plighted love?

Some fearful ill may soon betide
The blooming partner of his heart,
And he should ne'er forsake the side
Of her he loves—should never part
From form as fair as thine, young maid;
But surely now thou art betray'd—
Or he could ne'er thus have stray'd,
And left thee wand'ring—no, his word
Hath duped thy young simplicity,
What else could cause him to desert,
Save that thou art not what thou wert,
To his impetuous spirit—girt
By fiery passions—Ah!—you wrong
His thoughts—to deem fidelity,
Which doth to him alone—of all—belong,
Had ever lost its influence,
With heart, whose love was so intense
For thee, his soul's Divinity;
But thou wilt pardon him that he
Should thus appear to banish thee,

He is a man of musing mind,
Nor loves to mingle with his kind,
And thou should'st sure have somewhat glean'd,
Of his strange temp'rament—not weaned
From the suggestions of his thought,
Which still effect, as they have wrought,
Strange phantasies that gather round
His mystic being—and have bound
Their victim in a fatal chain,
Whose bondage ne'er may cease again.
But wherefore art thou here thus lone?
Thine eye is wild, thy cheek is pale,
Night wears apace—thou must begone—
Or seek repose in yonder vale;
Where evening winds are at their solemn song,
Mystic minstrelsy that to wilds belong:
It cannot be that thou art here,
To seek for him—that man of fear,
Fond Lora—beauteous maid—beware—
He is not now that he hath been,

And thou would'st shrink from him I ween,
Could'st thou behold his alter'd mien;
Some little hours much change have wrought,
A wand'rer now is he in thought;
He'd gaze upon thy stranger brow,
Unconscious of his early vow;
And thou would'st chide his apathy,
Or else thy bosom heave the sigh,
That mourn'd his infidelity;
And he would grasp thy dewy hand,
And wave his own like wildest wand,
Commune with forms unseen by thee,
Then hush'd in tranced vacancy,
His ev'ry nerve would seem enchain'd,
And then as if a something pain'd
The recollection of his brain,
As if a fiery chain around
His throbbing temples fiercely wound,
He'd gently wave his finger o'er
Its beating pulses—and implore,

With supplicating look on high,
A respite from the agony,
That preyed upon his ev'ry nerve,
And caus'd him thus to turn away
From one he lov'd—through ev'ry day
Of better life—ere dark decay
Had yet commenc'd its with'ring sway.
Yes—such is he, young Lora—such,
Whom thou dost love with far too much
Of passion's deep intensity;
But who hath heart to tell thee this,
And mar a world of so much bliss
As mantles round thy faithful soul,
And drug the draught of the glitt'ring bowl,
That early life now proffers thee,
With venom of such subtlety?
But thou must wake—and wake to weep
The dismal tale that sure must steep
Thy senses in oblivion's wave,
Or sweep them to the happier grave.

* * * * * * *

And Lora's missing—Osma fled—
Perchance he slumbers with the dead—
No tidings since that dismal night,
He burst his bonds in Maniac might,
And vanished in mysterious flight,
Are heard to tell or how or where
Exists or perished his despair—
And there are mourning hearts for him,
And angel eyes are darkly dim,
In joys flow that once did swim,
Whene'er they caught the light of his,
Nor sought to know if it were bliss,
That flooded from that speaking soul,
And burnt delirious o'er the whole,
Of ardent features stamp'd in pain,
She only deem'd he loved again;
And now that eye hath clos'd for ever,
Some dreary months have passed away,

Since first he forced himself to sever
From Lora's heart—nor dar'd obey
The fonder dictates of his own—
That urged him still to linger near
The spot that held a thing so dear;
But other powers possess'd him then,
That struggled for stern mastery,
Which being gained—he ne'er again,
May look upon a form as fair
As her's—whom he hath darkly flown,
And left to waste away in lone
And painful vigil, set within
A heart that ne'er knew taint of sin,
Till first it loved—then so intense
The flame that burnt within the vein
Of her affections—penitence
Can ne'er perform lustration o'er
The heart that madly knelt before
An earthly image as divine.

* * * * * * *

But such all truer feelings are,
Whate'er this callous world may say,
Though such alas!—too oft betray
Their own sublime intensity;
Of jarring elements—the war
Then comes like an Eternity,
And revels in the reeking spoils
Of human agony—that boils
Delirious in each bursting vein,
Till consciousness awake—in vain
She struggles—shudders, and recoils,
From inward desolation's waste,
She hath no power o'er the past;
And then comes settled ruin's reign;
That ever loves to wear the smile,
That is a mockery of pain;
As if the spirit bloom'd the while.
The beam that paly chequers o'er
The features that it warm'd before—

That sheds a calm serenity
Upon destruction's mass around,
Is like the Moon, that tranquilly
Looks down upon an Earthquake's wreck,
That darkens o'er the barren ground,
Revealing ev'ry ghastly speck,
That shadows forth within the light,
Which only serves to aid the horrid night.

* * * * * * *

Around her dark eye's pensile orb,
I've mark'd the beams of sorrow play,
Like Night upon the verge of Day.
Her mental being did absorb
All other powers—and the light,
Which should have lit her youthful cheek,
With hues that richly burn and speak,
Had vanish'd from all outward sight,
But doubly fervent glow'd *within.*
Oh! there it was the spirit wrought,

And could external glance but win,
The beauty of her ev'ry thought,
Survey the features of her mind,
The world would bend to womankind,
As to the Deity we adore;
Then Scandal's tongue would cease to ply,
Its venom o'er each purer name,
And lovely woman's worth and fame,
Would reascend the purity,
Upon whose height they lov'd to soar,
And be a worship as of yore.

* * * * * * *

Her beauty was the light of Love,
Its purity and grace,—
Her worth was virtue from above,
That nothing could efface—
Her stern fidelity was truth,
That heaven might adore,
It was the glory of her youth,
A solitary power—

That nought could weaken or destroy,
The source of all her tend'rest joy,
Nor would admit the least alloy,
From any thought that was not his;
What was the world to her—the bliss,
That flow'd from love of one fond heart,
That world she felt could ne'er impart;
And well she deem'd it waste of life,
To mingle in its wretched strife—
To be that busy, idle thing,
That buzzes upon silken wing—
The insects of our fleeting spring—
That sun themselves within the ray
Of the poor heart's prosperity,
But when the shadows of dismay,
The glooms of chill adversity—
Are mantling round our little day,
And promise cheerless night to come—
These gayer things with gayest hum,
Then wing their glitt'ring plumes away
To sun them in some happier sky.

And thus they flit from scene to scene,
Creatures of a soulless being,
Without a moment's real pleasure,
Simp'ring on in Folly's measure—
Striving from each stranger flower,
To win the joy of one poor hour,
Without a heart that throbs in sooth,
Without an eye that wakes to hail,
Return—or sight of absent love,
Without fidelity in youth,
Without—when life begins to fail,
That friendship which is from above.

* * * * * * *

A Maniac from his dungeon bed,
Where fett'ring chains had held him long,
Plunged in the hell that glar'd around,
His youthful limbs in iron bound,
Hath Osma burst his bonds—and fled.
Report is busy with his fame,
But Scandal ne'er can mar a name

That hath descended from a line,
Of high and martial ancestry;
But he's *inheritor* of woes,
That chill the warmth of soul divine,
And to the malice of his foes,
Of food afford the full supply;
E'en in his boyhood stern and proud,
He bore the mem'ry of his race,
Stamp'd in each lineament of face;
Though o'er his brow a fatal cloud
Hung dark and dreary—in each look,
A Soul beam'd forth that ne'er could brook
Dishonour's slightest taint or stain,
Inflexible in ev'ry vein,
That throbb'd alarm at sound or dread,
That rose indignant at the breath,
That dar'd to breathe suspicion's breeze;
The wisper'd subtlety that said,
Who wins a glance of *character*,
Through human nature shrewdly sees,

Venom of busy tongues thus saith,
And that it fables will aver.

* * * * * * *

The Moon is up—and still and deep,
Her faithful vigil o'er the sleep
Of Nature holds—serenely bright,
Companion of the lonely night,
Her image o'er the sable Tide,
Chequers in solitary pride;
And not a breath disturbs the scene—
And not a sound is heard between—
The fitful pauses of the breeze,
As stealing through the moonlight trees—
It faintly wakes a boding plain,
That scarcely swells—ere lull'd again—
It is the hour when Spirits walk
Unhail'd—and hold mysterious talk
With kindred phantoms of the air—
Invisible to mortal eye,
Like Heralds of eternity,

Through fell, and flood, and mountain-wood,
Mutt'ring mysterious spells are heard
In nightly converse still to keep—
When not a leaf upon the gale,
And not a solitary bird,
Wakes music in the azure deep
Of the hush'd sky—and heaven and earth
Stand mute—as if an earthquake's birth
Were darkly struggling in its womb—
And all the powers of nature stood
In hideous trance—as if a tale—
With potency to damn—were then
To be disclos'd—as if the tomb
Of the slumb'ring world were yawning wide,
And they into the whelming tide,
That rolled them to eternity—
The awful leap not yet quite ta'en—
Were pausing their last glance to take—
The freshness of this upper sky,
Awhile to breathe—ere yet the sleep,

That rounds the span of this poor life,
And closes upon all its strife—
The only slumber sorrow cannot wake,
Its cloudy curtains round them sweep—
And whelm them in oblivion's wave,
That soothing solace of the grave.

* * * * * * *

But there are mortal steps that tread,
And sudden wake the slumb'ring voice
Of echoes o'er the distant plain—
And hills resound the hideous plain—
A low—dull murmur—of dread tone—
Like midnight warning from the dead—
It comes again—in hollow moan—
And now a louder—and a deadlier burst,
And silence all—some Soul accurst—
Some Spirit that may not rejoice,
That man and nature seem so fair,
Some Maniac—madden'd by despair.

* * * * * * *

Oh! who can tell, save he who keeps
His secret watch with thee—old Night—
And pries with thee into all place—
And wanders with thee in all time—
How many a damning sound and sight,
Pollute thy sanctity, and mar thy grace—
How many a deed of crimson crime,
Thy holy vestment in its colour steeps.
And Oh! when sleeps the peaceful eye,
And when the happy breast is still,
Then starts the tear—and swells the sigh—
Of hearts o'erflowing fast with sorrow's fill.

* * * * * * *

Cold as that starry sky She lay,
All bare and beautiful the snow
Of her bleak bosom, bleach'd to night—
Oh God! it was a straining sight,
To view the heaven of that decay—
When not a breeze that seem'd to blow,

To fan her dewy tresses there—
But wafted on its wing away
Some perfume richer than the tear
Of orient worlds—when not a breath,
That breath'd its music from on high,
But seem'd the fervour of her spirit's sigh—
The plaining of that purple wound—
That gleam'd a rose-tint on the cheek of Love—
A warm suffusion from above—
Blushing unutterable thought—
As pure—as eloquently wrought—
Yes—there all beautiful in death—
A blessed smile around her lip,
The sunset-softness of a cheek,
Where Love had lavish'd all his breath,
Where parting passion still might sip—
Amid the fragrance of its streak,
So softly sweet—and sweetly weak—
The last—cold dews of its despair—

And Madness, in an hour like this,
Might well have ta'en its icy kiss—
And there too lay the willow-hand,
With frozen vien of lifeless blue—
Whereon the waves of midnight dew,
In genial icyness repose.
That hand—which late was warm with love—
Which late return'd its pressure's thrill—
Is languid—impotently still—
One snowy arm was resting there,
On leaflets of a rifled rose—
Whose tints where emblem of her fate—
Too rudely torn from tender wand,
Where in its pride it bloom'd of late—
Yet breathing o'er th' enamour'd air,
The richness of a warmer glow:
The other resting—as in prayer—
Upon the heart—seem'd yet to say,
Oh! spare me—I have lov'd *thee* well,
Better than human tongue can tell.

* * * * * * *

Her Spirit fled to realms above—
That stiffen'd tenement of clay,
Alone may feel the sterner blow,
That Phrenzy dealt—and there the eye—
Once fraught with Passion's holiest fire—
A shrouded orb of rayless light,
Without the love of yesterday,
Without the beam that e'en to night—
Few moments ere her spirit's flight—
Had lit the temple of a soul of flame.

* * * * * * *

Oh God! 'twas chilling to survey,
The progress of that still decay,
That slowly dim'd Expression's ray—
Like some dark Cloud—whose dull advance—
Is heralded by shadows cast—
Faintly and fitfully at first,
On trembling light of a lone Moon—
Its lustre fades by slow degree,
As the vast volume nearer winds—

More feeble now—and now more light—
Each tint successive varying still—
And each still lovelier than the last—
Till—as the sable density,
Full circumfusing round its noon,
Of gath'ring night—and nigher—nigher—
Suspended o'er its surface blends
Its dull shadows into one—till
O'er its lustre, with sudden burst—
Substantial darkness comes—as came
The fearful midnight of that cheek—
Yet still the Spirit seem'd awhile,
To linger there—so coldly pure—
She slept like one in dreamy trance—
The lips could scarce forbear to speak,
Just parted by a placid smile—
To sever e'en a breath had power;
Oh God!—that smile smote on the heart—
And told a truth too dearly prov'd,

It might have froze the gazer there,
To monument of fixed wo—
If *human* was the hand that dealt
Upon a form like that, its blow;
Well may it shrink 'neath palsied blast,
Or seek the fate it late had given,
In refuge from an angry heaven,
(That must requite that deed at last.)

* * * * * * *

But who art *thou* with crimson steel,
Triumphant reeking from its belt
Of iron—that o'er snowy heel,
Is glitt'ring to the night afar?
With mutt'ring lip and glased eye,
As doubtful yet to stand or fly?
Oh! thine the guilty hand I ween—
He stood—and 'twixt him and the sheen,
Of that high lamp—a something spread
Its sable pall—he sought the *dead*—
But death had vanish'd from his sight;

Again in all her cherub grace,
Of gracile form and moonlight face—
Young Lora wakes to love again:
And Osma kneels beside his bride,
To press a lip of purple pride—
And strain a bosom to his heart,
A breast—his own scarce knew it loved,
Till now—more passionately dear,
Than aught of human birth—this night,
Hath prov'd her to her wayward Love.

And there beneath that large clear star,
He bows him to the form whose light
Was all that earth still held for him,
And scarce refrains from laughing wild,
To think that vagrant had beguil'd,
So long—the eyes in vigil dim,
That only wak'd and watch'd for him,
Through long and dreary lapse of time,
For one who looks far lovelier,

To his distemper'd vision now,
Than when she blush'd to earliest vow.
He sought to rouse her from that trance,
He sought once more to win a glance
From that large eye that rolled in love,
And in his melancholy joy—
A plaintive song for her he wove,
Unmix'd with aught of light alloy,
A deep—pure stream as musical,
And sadly sweet—as Even-fall,
And Silence woo from airy dell:
It breath'd of love a witching spell,
And touch'd on memory of days,
When he had blush'd to sing her praise,
And she had lov'd to list the lays
His spirit woke in Nature's glow,
When Nature smil'd—ere human wo
Had dash'd his little all of joy below
He ceas'd—and turn'd his 'wilder'd eye—
Why doth he start?—Oh! God—of pain,

An agonizing smile did seem,
To mantle that embodied dream—
A light of suffering—that shone
O'er ev'ry feature—vein and bone
Alike were stamp'd with its impress,
Yet she was still all gentleness—
'Twould seem unto the sight as though,
The sudden sternness of the blow,
That pierc'd into her very heart,
And shatter'd nerves with one rude crash,
And blasted with an iron dash
The functions of that feeble frame.
So momently they ceas'd their part
To ply—that like a rapid stream,
Damm'd from its course by sudden wrath,
Leaving awhile a bared bed—
All was compression—wound in steel,
The bounding elasticity
Of powers—that had ceas'd to feel,
Had now subsided—without aim,

So sudden wrapt in fiery chain,
That darted round her heart and brain,
Suspended o'er their wither'd path—
Held back as by a single hair—
Few moments from their strong career,
Their bondage now they burst at last,
Recoiling with a forceful blast—
The plastic springs of life did seem,
Although vitality be dead—
Thus sudden to resume again,
Their full dimensions and their place.

And this it was that o'er that face,
Stamp'd so indelibly the trace
Of her poor spirit's inward pain.
* * * * * * *
The blow that smote so true a heart,
Was dealt by hand her own had press'd,
By one whom she had lov'd too well:
And thus she died upon a smile,
That seem'd to say—we cannot part—

That seem'd to woo him—but to spare!
And the stern steel that stabb'd that breast—
Stabb'd through her smile and speechless pray'r—
That holy light of love the while,
That lit the murmuring lip to tell,
'Tis sweet to die—when passion deals
The fervid blow—the spirit feels
That heavenly gush of martyr'd faith,
That triumphs o'er the strife of death:
And thus so soft, so calm, and fair,
With all the while a blessed tear,
That stole from 'neath the closed lid,
And spoke of joy dash'd by dread,
Ere yet her spirit's light had fled—
So placid thus at first did seem
The sleep that o'er her senses shed,
That Maniac murd'rer would not deem,
The shaded orb for ever hid;
He would not deem that snowy hand
Lay lifeless there upon the strand—

The lip his own had press'd in love,
He stealing sought to thrill again,
By softest kiss—but sought in vain—
'Twas fixt in death—yet still he strove
To win from slumber its caress,
Of so much luscious loveliness—
But when that flood of agony,
Came rushing o'er each feature there—
When something strange and doubtful caught—
A moment his unsettled thought—
When ev'ry sense seem'd still'd for ever—
And not a breath appear'd to sever
The ringlets of her clust'ring hair—
And not a pulse that beat reply,
To sense of touch, or sound, or sight—
He sudden rose—as though the light
Of that high Moon scarce shone aright
Upon the face that he survey'd:
Awhile he strode around the dead,

Then sudden paused, and smote his brow,
As if a veiling cloud hung low
Around it there—to dupe his sense—
And now as though rememberance—
All sudden broke upon his brain—
With one loud shriek impell'd by pain,
He fell to earth—* * * * * *

* * * * * * *

From her blue home the Moon is keeping
Vigil o'er those Spirits sleeping
Within her soft—voluptuous ray—
Will they awake, with waking day?
For Day within her dewy vest,
Is laughing in the Orient—
Few mourns and one—was doubly blest—
In all she lov'd—a parent—friend—
Though grief with joy would ever blend,
And pleasure scarce begun—would end—
Though life with pain from birth began,
And only darken'd as it ran—

Though she was sway'd by sorrowing mood,
Engender'd in her solitude,
With wildest cast imbuing thought—
Until she shrank from that it wrought—
Though friends grew cold, and life prov'd vain,
Yet firmly stood the brunt of pain—
Which only varied its dark chain
With fresher pang to gall again—
Though—more than all—her heart was wed
To one—alas!—whose heart seem'd dead—
Who would at times perplex her view,
As seem'd his soul to her's untrue,
While nearer to that soul she grew—
Though these—in all their power combin'd,
They could not change that faithful mind—
And she did oft essay to curb,
The thoughts that would his peace disturb—
As all unworthy him—whose fate
'Neath influence seem'd of darkest hate.

Impell'd along his dreary path,
By heaven's hand of mystic wrath.
She sought to sooth each troubled hour,
When would his brow in darkness lower,
Nor sought in vain—she had the power,
Albeit but seldom—to assuage,
The fever of delirium's rage—
It was the aim of her pure life
To lull his bosom's stormy strife;
She reck'd not the world beside,
Its fleeting change of time and tide—
It was a solitary pride,
That link'd her to that Maniac's side—
Nor heeded voice that oft would chide,
Her Spirit's fond fidelity;
She clung to him through weal and wo,
With him through life she hop'd to share,
Its varied scenes of joy and care,
And when their course had run below,
To join him in Eternity.

Oh God! it was her latest hope,
That she with madness still might cope—
Her ev'ry word and action proved
How more than well her bosom loved—
And what requital met that love?
What deed is there *his* heart to prove?
Let that pale form alone attest—
With closed eye—and bleeding breast.

* * * * * * *

And He—who lay beside her there—
The other Spirit of the night—
What cause had he for his despair,
That wrought around such fearful sight?
The God who lit his soul may tell,
Why it was fram'd thus terrible—
And he was frenzied—wherefore so—
It rests not with the world to show—
But he was frenzied—and insanity—
Must plead its cause in after time—
With Heaven's judge impartially—
Who doth award to good or crime—

The measure of its just decree—
Of late at least unstain'd by ought,
Of savage or of murd'rous thought—
He moved—a man for whom—who met—
Felt deepest pity and regret.
And he—'tis said—at times would seem,
Himself to feel the darkness of that dream,
From whose strong spell—no power could redeem.
But still though wild—with guiltless soul,
He journey'd tow'rds life's final goal—
And promis'd yet to close in peace,
His tortur'd days of deep disease—
As meek as martyr's breast, his course
He held—unclouded by remorse.
And whilome too—he seem'd to love,
The friends from whom of late—to rove—
Each stronger passion—sternly strove—
Oh! God—'twas fearful sight to see,
How surely his adversity

Around him wound its cankering way—
But still amid the clouds that flung
Their darkness o'er his morning ray—
To *one* his mem'ry fondly clung—
And on his weak and wand'ring tongue,
Her name in mildest accents hung.
That passion's power o'er him threw,
The freshness of its morning dew;
Though wilder'd in his thought was he,
To him—*She* was all melody—
And though weak friends would shun him now,
Yet she was faithful to her vow—
And though the world forsook beside,
Unmov'd was Lora's love or pride—
Then wherefore—God of Heaven—say,
Did Osma's hand his Lora slay?
Was there around him no dark foe,
On whom he might have dealt that blow?
Could not on villain heads his steel,
Delayed doom been made to deal?—

The champion of thy just law,
Why smote he not the perjur'd heart?
Or from the murd'rer's bosom draw
The stream that ne'er had stain'd his dart?
Oh! wherefore did he not obey
The dictates of this purer sway?
Why—God inexorable—why
Impell'd to deed of such a die,
As hush'd in death—his Lora's latest sigh?
But they may join their hands in Heaven,
For surely he must be forgiven—
Not *he* the cause—though his the deed,
That made that guileless bosom bleed—
And even now *she* is at rest—
While anguish waits another breast—
Her eye is closed—in darkest night—
He only wakes—to curse the light—
The blow that smote her heart—is o'er—
His—still must rankle at the core—

Though sleeping upon earth so cold—
She's freed from storms of this world's hold—
While he who spurns the dust below,
Is humbler than that clay-cold form—
Companion of as cold a worm.
Though never earthly breeze may blow
Its freshness o'er her cheek again,
There is no hectic there of pain;
No burning brow or bursting vein,
O'er which in life the breeze may pass,
'Twill ne'er be cold as hers, I ween,
Who sleeps 'neath yonder waving grass.
His soul is yet unstain'd by sin—
For he is not—that he hath been;
And when he bared his steel to strike,
He deem'd that God approv'd the deed—
For she was bound to him—alike
By ties of passion and of blood—
And when the world had chaf'd a mood

From nature proud and desolate—
By them but little understood—
His spirit languished to be freed,
And rose indignant 'neath the weight—
Of wrongs and sorrows—that impressed—
Their burthen on his troubled breast—
Till he became a thing all worn,
And drooping in the haunts of men—
What marvel that his nature then,
Was changed—that as he once had been—
He could no longer stand the scath,
Of idiot drivellers?—his faith
In life—was broken—and his mind—
Tinged from its birth by darkest hue—
To melancholy thoughts resign'd—
Became in its deep workings blind;
Till all distinctions overthrown,
Within itself of right and wrong,
A chaos of dark doubts had grown,

The temple of his once clear soul.
He deem'd unto this life belong,
Opinions fram'd by falsest rule,
Design'd to gull the gaping fool—
Or worldlings—upon whom alone,
Such slavish fetters of control
Were made to press—and well he deem'd—
The world no better than it seemed—
That much was glitter—all disguise—
From whose corruption—shrank the wise.
Thus far—his thought mistook not truth—
And they who know the most—must own—
That there is nought, which lost—or won—
But leaves the heart the more undone.
The wretched strife the many wage,
For brief renown on glory's page—
The various passions that engage
The drudging herd from age to age;
Prove even less than nought in sooth—
And all that moves the spirit here—

That wakes its smile—or draws its tear—
Must end at last in the despair—
Which mourns, that life hath nought to give,
Requital of the task—to live.
What marvel then—that mind like his,
Became in its o'erboiling, fraught
With those wild feelings—that have wrought
The wreck of all that promis'd bliss?
To Osma's heart was Lora bound
By ties—that daily deeper wound
Their spells of intense sorcery—
And when he saw that Treachery
Would tear that bosom from his own—
He smote her—and without a groan
She perish'd—died—as all should die—
Without a murmur—or a sigh—
Without a word—save that which said—
For his—her Spirit freely bled.
Such was the end of one, whose faith—
The world may smile at—but which hath—

Within itself more loveliness,
Than brazed hearts may dare confess.

* * * * * * *

For Him, who sleeps beside her there—
He yet must wake to his despair—
And heavier chains, and darker fears
May mantle round his coming years;
For words are waxing wild abroad—
And he must meet that they accord—
A darker dungeon—and a death—
That mocks the gasp of his last breath;
God nerve his soul with might of power
To bear the struggle of that hour—
When—like a felon—to the wheel
His brain must yet delirious reel—
And the brute multitude around,
Upon that fiery death-bed bound—
Will smile to see his writhing limb—
And mark his eye in phrenzy swim—
And hear his heart—with sudden crack—
Yield to the torture of the rack—

Oh! would to God—ere come that day
His soul might long have pass'd away.

* * * * * * *

Light breaks upon the world again—
Young Day is on the eastern Main,
And back upon the West displays
The radiance of her blushing rays—
'Twixt Man and Nature, there appears,
No sympathy of human fears—
The one all smiles, the other tears—
And well may tears of sorrow flow—
Full many a heart is stricken low—
By Osma's darkest deed of death,
Within that city, where but few
And transient mourns—young Lora grew
The loveliest blossom to the view—
And now a wither'd leaf—by breath
Of angry tempest blighted—strewn
In wintery waste—alas! too soon.

And—Lo! in saddest guise they come—
A melancholy band of mourners by—
In sable weeds of sorrow drest—
They bear her to her dusty home—
That marble couch of sabath rest,
Where anguish ne'er disturbs the guest—
And there is *one*—amid that train—
With folded arms—and unmov'd mien—
And steady eye—and look serene—
As though she scarcely mark'd the scene—
Her heart was buried in its pain—
And voiceless in its utter wo.
Few moments—and a *mother* prest
An only Daughter to her breast—
And now that mother childless stands—
With eye resign'd and clasped hands—
To take a last farewell—of all
That still to life—her years could bind—
But who art thou, with frantic call,
And light'ning speed upon the wind,

In terror comes?—He burst the crowd—
Impetuous—like thunder cloud—
He forced his way—the ranks opposing—
To save—o'er whom the grave was closing—
In midnight—and in wrath he came—
His visage stream'd like comet-flame—
He hurl'd his iron hand on high—
And swore with Her to live or die—
Whom God into his soul had given,
To lead him by her love to heaven—
But when he caught the eye of one—
The mother he had thus undone—
Who silent stood, with look of wild,
But heart-struck anguish, on her child—
Whom he had made so humble there—
He sudden knelt—as if in prayer—
Himself as humble—humbler now—
Beneath that mourner's feet full low—
He bowed him to the wreck he wrought—
And seem'd as if from her—he sought,

That she would spurn the felon head,
That plan'd the blow, which struck the dead—
But when he found she strove to raise,
With feeble hand—his prostrate form—
He rose—and fixed with her his gaze,
Upon that partner of the worm,
Descending gently to the tomb—
And when at last—its pondrous gloom
Closed slowly o'er the form they lov'd—
In infant helplessness she moved—
And bore his tott'ring steps away—
Supported by the aid of those,
Who yet might prove his bitt'rest foes—
And doom him to the vilest death—
That ever closed a felon's breath.

* * * * * * *

A painful—intellectual Being,
Invisible—or—if e'er seen—
To Fancy's wizard eye alone—
Those mad'ning forms of love are known—

Creatures of the heart—that never die—
Immortal as the agony,
Around the soul their presence flings,
As if 'twould burst its frenzied strings—
And then—alas! we weep—that they,
Like earthly forms should pass away—
Illusive dreams, inhuman sent—
To torture this frail tenement—
And when the first—convulsive burst—
Of crush'd affections doth subside,
They come like spectre-forms accurst—
The images of things that died—

As bodies' elasticity
All durable impressions spurn—
And softest surfaces alone
Retain through time the pressure strong—
Thus in the heart's affinity—
To plaintive Spirits aye belong,
Capacity for deepest wound—

That through an age of life must burn—
For nothing human can atone,
The loss of all that ever bound
Each feeling—in the heated round—
Of the precious world's festivity—
Like those bright iles volcanic, that emerge
From ocean's stormy depths, to gild the surge—
Awhile that bloom, exulting in their light—
Then sudden sink into eternal night—
Like these—will fade the hopes of life—
To leave us barrenness and strife—
A bleak and sterile track behind—
O'er which the melancholy mind
Plods heavily and dull—
And then they marvel who behold,
The Spirit to o'erflowing—full
Of better waters—and grown old,
Ere yet its spring day glow be past—
A blighted leaf by early blast,

Condemn'd to winter in the gloom
Of woes—that shudder at the tomb—
But scarce may hope for peace—before
Its tranquilising mound close o'er
The sufferer's head—the grief that's born,
From loss of all—that o'er the morn
Of chequer'd life, sheds warmth and light—
That lends to youth, its strong delight—
That pictures happiness to come—
And wispers to the heart, that some—
Amid the crowd, the shock, and hum
Of the precious world—are yet endu'd,
With feeling for our solitude—
That we, though desolate, are not,
By every bosom all forgot—
That still there be some two—or one—
Whose souls may beat in unison—
In kindred sympathy and love—
The grief that wakes from loss of this,

Cares little into what abyss
It after falls—and as we strove,
We yet may strive, 'gainst ills that wait,
To darken o'er our mortal state;
Oh! God—'tis cheerless still to be,
Companionless in misery—
Within a busy, bitter world,
By none belov'd—with none to love,
But live as from another hurl'd,
Whose fearful destiny was wove
By mystic fate in darkest loom,
And shrouded in eternal gloom.

* * * * * * *

And Love—that makes or mars us here—
Suspended 'twixt a smile and tear—
Love tempts the heart to leave it lone—
Oh! better far be with the dead,
Than travail through a dreary life,
When all its brightest charms are fled—

To dream of joy, when joy is gone—
Till wreck'd at last by inward strife,
We struggle with convulsive throes,
That jar us to the latest close
Of years—that seem to feed on woes.
Yes—Love will fix the fated heart—
And to its feverish'd hope impart
A momentary joy—
And then like ev'ry earthly thing,
Away it flies on swiftest wing—
To leave a dark alloy
Of feelings—that ne'er trust again,
The smile that only woos to pain.
Oh God! to live, and look around,
View Beauty—Youth—and Pleasure meet,
To chase the hours with glowing feet—
And on a wheel of torture bound—
Self-exil'd to a dark profound,
Of agonizing thoughts—that eat,

Into the very core—though fair,
And fresh all outward form may seem—
For spaces 'twixt this life and death are there,
Philosophy ne'er dreamt of—nor can dream.

* * * * * * *

Within a Dungeon's cell remote,
Sat Osma—fetter'd and alone—
There was a full—unnatural pulse,
Whose beatings almost echo'd through,
That ample vault—the icy dew,
Rung from the woes that did convulse,
His wasted frame—bespoke the tone,
Of his broken mind—he did not smote,
His brow—nor rend his sable hair,
That hung in ringlets of despair,
Around his front of marble hue—
He did not rave in accents wild,
Lamentings fitfully that swell,
From tortures of an inward hell—

He did not call on her he slew—
No—nor the mother of that child,
Whom late his troubled memory knew—
And still who rose upon his view,
With clasped hand and—streaming eye,
In all that utter agony—
That bow'd her hoary head to earth,
Upon that night—when in the dearth,
Of crush'd affections—she survey'd
The ruin'd trust—he had betray'd—
He did not crave a curse to blast—
One effort—and but one at last,
In hideous convulsion made—
He bow'd his head—and would have pray'd—
But scarce his fault'ring tongue essay'd,
To name its God—when sudden dread,
Quick mantled o'er his quiv'ring frame—
And then as if a bolt had sped,
And faithful to its murd'rous aim—

Had pierc'd his brain—he nerveless fell,
With half suppress'd—convulsed groan,
Upon his dungeon's echoing stone,
Which did resound that wild farewell,
To earthly peace, and heavenly hope—
Some blasted moments there he lay—
And when his tortur'd senses woke,
He feebly struggled to arise—
But something doubtful caught his eyes,
And held him there in stern surprise—
A sudden hectic flush'd his cheek,
'Twas struggling passions farewell streak—
A moment came—a moment past—
His face resum'd its livid cast—
"My hours are few at best—I feel—
And scarcely worth a felon's wheel—
I think I was not born to die,
A death that dooms to infamy—
But—take my life—'tis fleeting fast,
I reck not—so I rest at last—

But quickly villain—or I smite,
The form thou deem'st is thine by right—
Quickly take it"—as he said—
He bar'd from 'neath his garb a blade
Of glitt'ring steel—and would have smote—
But ere his impious hand he rais'd,
He felt a grasp his own disarm,
And sprung to wrestle with his lot—
But curs'd in vain the palsied nerve,
His will—whose functions fail'd to serve—
And shrunk from weakness—while he gaz'd,
With eye that glar'd as 'neath a charm,
Fix'd in stern scrutiny upon,
The form that knealt beside him there—
"Forbear—Oh! God—my Son—my Son,
Nor drive this old brain to despair"—
What voice was that?—alas! a voice,
He lov'd in boyhood—and whose tone,
Was ever wont to bid rejoice,
The bosom that it hail'd in lone,

And fearful sounds of anguish now—
And oft his hands in infancy,
Had play'd with ringlets of that brow,
When it was full of life's young glow—
And in those pithless arms of age,
His sorrows he did oft assuage—
And on that trembling bosom there,
He oft had lisp'd his infant prayer—
That voice and brow, that arm and breast,
A Spirit worthy once caress'd—
That Spirit *chang'd*—why are they here?
" Father—my days have pass'd below,
Not 'midst earth's sunshine, and its storm—
But one dark-rolling wave of wo,
Which thus hath wreck'd mine early form—
God—that in mercy visits all,
Denied his holy light to me—
And they who *least* were prone to fall,
Seem'd children of his charity—

It may be— some *ancestral* crime,
Hath stain'd mine earthly heritage—
And yet—for deeds that were not mine,
'Twas hard to suffer orphanage!
For oh! I have surviv'd the hope,
That pictur'd promis'd happiness—
And now, I can no longer cope
With my lost state of wretchedness.

* * * * * * *

Dost see yon solitary grave,
Where the luxuriant wild flow'rs wave,
As if to mock the mouldering dead?
There—on the cold, bare ground, this head,
On many a night, I've bow'd in prayer—
Not to my God—but *her* whose ear,
In life, while all have spurn'd beside,
Was never clos'd in steeled pride.
Death had not so much chang'd that heart
Which once, in living loveliness,
Was wont to bear each sterner part
That waits us in life's wilderness—

But *she* will plead for one whose fate,
Denies that he himself should pray:
She is not so much chang'd of late—
Her Spirit still survives her clay.

* * * * * * *

She died for me, who lov'd her best,
Amid a world that woo'd and blest—
She died for me—who cannot die—
Immortal made, by agony—
I lov'd her best, though subject then
To an appalling malady—
And—though unlike to other men,
I won her angel sympathy—
Her sympathy?—I won her *soul!*
'Twas bound to me by ev'ry tie,
That links its parts unto a whole,
In body's strange consistency.

* * * * * * *

I lov'd her best, who love her now,
Though cold in earth she sleeps below.

* * * * * * *

In life, they fram'd a hideous tale,
Which, like to autumn's withering gale—
Nipp'd the fair blossoms of her spring:
They told her that *Insanity*—
Around mine ancestry did fling
The chain of its fatality—
That dark, electric chain of wo,
Which wound around my *cradled* sleep,
Causing this blood's delirious flow,
The drops that sudden freeze—and creep
In dull and heavy motion—round
The ruins of a blasted heart—
And then—to sudden phrenzy wound,
A boiling ocean, reel, and start!
They told her—but 'twas treachery—
That I was wild at times—and so
They 'guil'd her young simplicity,
In hope her love she would forego—
But she was of unearthly mould,

More like the virgin race of old,
Than modern dames—would gear and gold,
Make lavish of the plighting hand—
Regardless of that golden band—
Affection's wreath, of vernal hue,
Steep'd in the heart's elysian dew—
Without whose holy influence—life
Is but a desert scene of strife—
Of warring words and jarring fears,
That blot our latest scene with tears.
I may not weep—and cannot pray,
For Heaven in wrath would turn away—
But there is one will sue for me,
If virtue dwells with charity—
I do not ask that *thou* should'st kneel,
And supplicate for sinners' weal—
I only crave thee to forgive,
The deed by which I cease to live—
For God—who frames in mystery—
Had stampt we with *fatality*—

And hurl'd me 'neath this loathsome sun,
To act and suffer as I've done—
But then this world, to which belong,
The treacheries that chafe to wrong,
This world, hath stung me deep and long—
And will not pardon crimes that rose,
From pressure of its keenest woes—
Oh! God!—if I dare name thy name!
In mercy deal with one, whose aim
In stainless youth had been to be,
Worthy of thine Eternity.
Thou mad'st my soul, and thou can'st tell,
Why it was tempted to rebel—
The world that frown'd upon my life,
Oh! thou who fram'st it—know'st its strife—
Thou knowest it is darkly prone,
To probe us to the very bone;
Its pastime—is calamity,
Its meditation—treachery—
That world—had work'd upon my blood,

Till suffering became my food—
The little that there was of good,
It murder'd in its very birth—
And smil'd upon my feelings dearth—
Yes—Father—thou, who didst know me then,
Didst know me one—outcast of men—
False prov'd my kindred—friends and all—
I stood alone—alone I fall—
One heart there was—but only one—
That beat with mine in unison—
But that is nothing—now I go,
Releas'd at last from human wo—
Nay—weep not—no—'tis now too late—
Tears cannot stay the hand of fate—
Once—ay once—my vitals freeze—
Thy hand—no more"—He is at ease—
His Spirit hath for ever fled—
And Osma sleeps on Lora's bed.

Note to page 13.

Night fled with him—and rose the Day—

Milton in one of his books of Paradise Lost, has the following line—

He fled,
And with him—fled the shades of night—

The meaning of this line has been foolishly mistaken by a late critic, whose anxiety to say something in the way of censure, has betrayed him into downright nonsense—it was absurb, he says, in Milton to suppose that *personal* presence could have any influence upon, or connection with, a *natural effect*—it was not a *thing of course*, that " with *him* fled the *shades* of *night*"—now could any apprehension have been more monstrously *literal* or false than this? Milton never meant what the critic sagely conceives the line to imply—" he fled, and with him fled the shades of night"—that is, he fled *just* at the approach of day, and as *he* fled, fled *too* the shades of night; not as a thing of course that he *carried night with him*—but that he fled just at the moment when night *herself* was flying; and this is the author's meaning in the line quoted from the text—Night fled with him, and rose the Day—this correction of the critic, is about as *luminous* as might have been expected; not less remarkable than the question put by one of the Fraternity, relative to a passage in Romeo and Juliet,

Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night,
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear.

Did Shakspeare mean to say, asked this clear-headed Commentator, that Juliet was *black*?—" Oh! learned Judge!"

TO LOUISA.

I.

Oh! thou—whom not the world beside,
With all its change of time and tide—
Could change or turn from me,
Yes—thou art lovely—and I feel,
Albeit 'gainst life my breast I'll steel—
That I could bend to thee.

II.

For thou art all unlike the crowd
Of womankind—the vain—the proud,
Who flutter through life's fleeting day.
The cold—the sordid—and the dull,
Though they may still be beautiful—
Compose the circle of the *gay*.

III.

Oh! I have turn'd from these—in lone
And sorrowing thought—to think that none—
Amid that frail, and fevered scene,
Were creatures moulded to my mind:
The fond—the faithful—and the kind—
Are seldom found in life I ween.

IV.

My soul became subdued to pain,
I strove to sooth the bursting vein—
And banish human hope,
Nor ever after tempt the draught,
Whose *venom* I too soon had quaff'd—
With passion who can cope?

V.

I felt my heart was busy still,
In framing schemes of good or ill—

My thought *confounded* these,
I did mistake its better aim,
And play'd—alas! too proud a game—
But failure did its ardour freeze.

VI.

For disappointment hath the power
To darken each succeeding hour—
And tame the feelings down;
However they may after rise,
They never tempt again the *skies*—
Their morning vigour flown.

VII.

But still my star of birth was young,
The lisp of love just caught my tongue—
Its power I essay'd to sing;
But stern derision chill'd the strain,
That never may awake again—
Neglect weighs down the Spirit's wing.

VIII.

And—thou art cold—Oh! world—I ween,
Thy Scorpion sting is deep and keen—
But, thou art nought to me:
I—less than nought—to love of thine,
My soul must learn to bear—and not repine—
Must smile at human treachery.

IX.

And I renounce thy sway, Oh! world!
Like Spirit from another hurl'd—
From thy affection and contempt:
Thou—who to me did'st nothing bring,
Save a most barren being's sting—
My aim shall be—to live exempt.

X.

Here then—once more—thou sleepless star,
That memory worships from afar—

Once more I turn to thee,
For wert thou vanish'd from my sight,
What beam would break my troubled night?
Oh! linger still with me.

XI.

And I will love thy heavenly ray,
So fond—so pure—so still its sway—
It is religion to adore,
Soft as yon beams that sweetly sleep,
On trembling bosom of the deep—
So soft—so sweet—thy moonlight power.

XII.

Thy plaintive eye—and dewy tress,
To me—have more than loveliness—
Dear emblems of thy soul,
They do reflect that inward light,
That warms the heart—but shuns the sight—
A ray of Him who form'd the whole.

XIII.

If thoughts could breathe—and words could burn,
From these—thine eye might happier turn—
For oh!—they breathe and burn of thee,
And yet—thou art a thing so fair,
As scarce to need my dubious prayer—
An outcast of Eternity.

XIV.

But if indeed there be a purer clime,
Where hearts may rest, that knew no rest in time,
That world may smile on me,
My wanderings may be forgiven,
For surely I have worship'd Heaven—
In loving my Louisa—*thee*.

XV.

And I will love through weal and wo,
Nor dread Misfortune's sterner blow—

With thee—'twere bliss to share distress,
For ev'ry wound that Sorrow might impart,
Would serve to bring thee nearer to my heart,
And holier frame its tenderness.

Philadelphia, March 20, 1821.

AN ENIGMA.

What field is that whose plain is ever green,
Exhibiting the bloom which still hath been
The same, though ages have their cloudy wings
Wav'd o'er its surface—where the music rings
Whose sound hath been eternal as the spheres—
Whose azure brow knows not the stamp of years,
Which set their withering seal on all beside—
Which spurns dominion, and where human pride
Hath left no trace of its consuming wrath,
Though it hath stalk'd in blood o'er every path
Of its most secret and illimitable range—
Whose motion, though unceasing, subject to no change—
Which, though subservient to man's varying will,
Hath yet the power to overwhelm him still;

And oft hath risen in its pride of might,
Quenching earth's glories in a starless night—
The only victor reckless of the strife,
Yet with dominion o'er creation's life—
The only tyrant not abusing power—
The only eye that wakes at every hour—
Whose reign hath been coeval with old Time,
Nor seeks extension, though through every clime
Its tributary vassals hold their sway—
Now black as night, now sunny as the day—
Though daily, hourly, traversed o'er by men,
Its secrets still lie hid from mortal ken—
Its presence owns at once the Indian shore;
Thence sweeping, circles frozen Labrador—
Its name familiar to the peasant's tongue—
Its glories too by bard and prophet sung,
And yet the secret of its birth unknown—
Observ'd by all, yet understood by none—
Though neighbouring nations circle it around,
It rears its head in solitude profound—

It stands alike a marvel and a gaze,
And they who dread it most, most yield it praise—
E'en I, who now its mysteries rehearse,
Know nought in sooth beyond this simple verse,
Which is itself a mystery—and so,
The task I leave to wiser heads to show
What this may be—first stumble on the name—
For, by my troth, they are not *both* the same—
And then the *thing itself* if ye'll expound,
The world shall laud ye as indeed profound.

THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER,

AT OLYMPIA.

Behold the Dome, which Greece in happier hour,
Proud of the magic of her matchless skill,
An off'ring worthy of the Thund'rer's might,
Erected to her God—in that blest day,
When Arts and Arms alike were in their prime,
And Glory's Sun unmenac'd with eclipse
From envious shadows of a far-off world—
High in its fretted vault, supremely shone.
Ethereal Fane!—proud rival of the skies!
Unequall'd monument of human pow'r!
In solitary grandeur, peering 'bove
The pigmy efforts of succeeding time—
Oh! who can dream of thee—of what thou wert,

E'er time's dark wing had mantled on thy light—
Nor worship mem'ry of that god-like race,
Whom dark-revolving ages, in their lapse,
Have swept to the abyss, but cannot shroud
From mortal ken, the glories of their line.
The heritage of *feeling*, who can mar?
Deep in the vault, in imag'd conflict, view
The human Centaur and fierce Lapith glare;
While Herculean labours frown full front.
The massy Portal gain'd— in softest guise,
See—cherub Peace her civic garlands weave,
To grace the brow of beauty-breathing Art.
Lo! in the centre of the Temple—look!
Behold the God of Phidias' mighty mind!
Sublime conception! on his vaulted throne
A burning mass of breathing harmony,
That rears its starry summit into heav'n—
Rob'd in the terror of his awful state,
And cloth'd in thunder, Jove Olympian tow'rs—
The God! the God! majestic and alone,

Supremely mighty, bares his blasting hand,
Dark with the destinies of Gods and men;
That iron arm, that sweeping, rocks the vast
Of the eternal concave, and from high
Hurls the live lightning—on his glitt'ring brow
The peaceful olive—Victory on the right
Sits plum'd with Horror, and a Diadem
Of dazzling glory nods upon the left.
See—how he smiles to view the Theban babe,
In torture writhe beneath the Sphynx's gripe—
With fiery fangs into his vitals wound,
And gorg'd with blood-drops of his blasted heart.
And orphan'd Niobe, with streaming eye,
And supplicating hand, in vain implores,
From the unbending marble of his brow,
The pitying mercy that would deign to save
From vengeful Fate, the scions of a race
That flourish'd once, and once was beautiful.
Beside his throne, in full proportions, view
The immortal Heroes of Olympic fame!

The keen-ey'd coursers of the Elian plain,
In all the lusty vigour of the race—
Speed in each nerve, and fire in every vein.
But who is He—with laurel-wreathed brow,
All radient in youth, conspicuous there?
With eye of light, and cheek of roseate hue?
How firm his step! and how with manly grace
He rears his marble front to heaven!—lovely
The pride with which, he spurning vaults from earth,
To tread th' impalpable of his spirit's home!
Beneath that glorious form, who near the God
Had ta'en his seat, look down!—what fairy dream
Dawns to the eye—of bridal fruit, by Loves
And Graces guarded! with their girdled zones—
In all the pride of maiden purity—
With tinsel-slipper'd feet, and braided hair?
They look like Heralds of Eternity—
Pure as Hesperian odours that they breathe,
And newly 'lighted from Elysian fields.
But Sorrow's soft, and melancholy tinge,

Doth sweetly shadow o'er the lines of light,
That blending, form an Iris of the cheek,
Where precious tears, like dew-drops of the rose,
Reflect the rich effulgence of its hues:
For full in view, the agony of nerves
And mighty muscles, wringing bloody sweat,
Is seen sustaining, pillar'd on the base
Of Atlantean shoulders, starry worlds,
That to their centre reel.—How drop by drop
That tortur'd spirit faulters life away!
While Gods malignant triumph in his fate.
And there—Oh! sight of painful loveliness!
The fair-hair'd daughter of a wond'rous race,
The bleeding Penthesilea reclines—
Pillow'd in arms that *slew*, but *lov'd* her still;
Illion's stern hero *vanquish'd*, yields to *grief*,
Whose potent power, Gods themselves confess.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

AMERICAN LITERATURE.

Before entering more fully upon the subject of American Literature, we would offer a few remarks in relation to an opinion of a great modern critic, affecting literature in general; more particularly as the question whether a people without some poetical antiquity, can ever possess a national literature, very materially concerns our own country. When Schlegel says, that a nation must possess some past period to which it can look back, and which may afford materials to its writers, in order that its Literature assume a tone and shape, which may identify it with the manners and sentiments of the people among whom it is found to flourish, we conceive him to have no other meaning than this, that in the literary as the natural world, there

must be a period of infancy, youth, and full maturity. In order that man attain to that age, when he is said to have reached his achme, it is necessary that he should have passed through the several gradations of his physical being, that his mental and natural powers should slowly, and with every possible advantage unfold themselves, to the attainment of a rational degree of perfection. If he betray symptoms of precocious development, the promises of a full and well proportioned growth, are never so flattering, as when the process of formation has been gradual—there is an affinity more or less in all this, to whatever is of regulated expansion, and this reasoning may be applied to Literature, which has been defined to be "the voice of human intellect." In order that its organs be true, clear and well attuned, they must be allowed to exercise themselves cautiously and delicately at first, and not strained beyond their natural pitch, with the wish of having them yield a full and settled tone, when their notes should betray the trembling vibration of a lisp. Thus then Literature cannot be expected to spring fully formed and perfect into life, like Pallas from the brain of Jove. It must first bud, then blossom, and then bear. This period of its budding is the very point of time to which it is enabled to look back in its autumn, as man, when his days have fallen into

the "yellow leaf," stands in relation to the time of his youth.

This period of literature is the precise one of fabulous existence; as the scenes and occurrences of our infancy pass in the mid day or decline of life, like shadows to the mind, in the act of reminiscence, so, the first dawn of Literature is all mist and twilight, when recalled through the full blaze of a meridian effulgence. Ages had passed away before Greece or Europe found themselves placed in that relation of distance, from one period to another, which affords sufficient materials and scope to the imagination; and it is in the works of fancy alone, that we find that tone of nature pervading which identifies a literature, with the individual nation among whom it is found to flourish. Science is too abstract in its principles to become indigenous to any soil; it is an universal exotic. Newton belongs to the world at large, while Shakspeare, perhaps, is claimed by England alone; that is, he is still English, although the subjects of his muse be as unconfined by time or place as those of the philosopher.

It is to be regretted that America, should stand almost in the same literary point of view with regard to Europe, that Rome did to Greece, and Europe to both Greece and Rome. We have been gathering up the gleanings of the fuller harvest of European science and

literature, as the Greeks in borrowing the letters, imported the learning of Phenician and Egyptian nations; but notwithstanding Greece may have borrowed much of her science and literary wealth, from nations older and richer than herself, she was yet exclusively indebted to her own resources, for every thing that she possessed, and displayed in the field of imagination. "That state in which human nature shoots wild and free, although unfit for other improvements, certainly encourages the highest exertion of fancy and of passion." Upon just such a condition of life did Homer cast his retrospective glance, rich in all the materials most fitted for the Epic Muse. Indeed, such is the state in which the flowers of the imagination bloom with most luxuriance, and in which its golden fruitage is gathered. It must have an Hesperian garden, though it may dispense with its Dragons. Critics usually bruise the apples and mar the foliage where they touch them at all. America, we repeat, stands almost in the same relation to Europe that Rome did to Greece, which is unfortunate. We borrow from our transatlantic brethren much in the same way, and almost to the same amount with the Romans in their intercourse with Greece; the consequence to Rome was, that the best writers of fiction only transcribed from the pages of those who had preceded them. Criticism too came in at a time when she should not have been received, and

her only effect was, to hasten the corruption of that, which would have worked its own way to ruin, less rapidly perhaps, but with equal certainty, unless some giant original, had sprung forth to arrest the mining principle in its progress.

To assert at the same time, however, as many have done, that because we are at present deficient in literature, in consequence of not possessing as yet, materials drawn from its most legitimate sources—past periods—which constitute the store-house, whence the imagination furnishes itself with the richest decorations—to say, that by reason of our present wants, we must necessarily continue poor—to argue from temporary weakness, permanent imbecility, is to pronounce, that because the infant evinces no symptoms of puberty, he never will become an adult. No, our literature will "grow with our growth, and strengthen with our strength:" all that we have to guard against is, the injurious efforts of criticism, which like those vicious restraints and devices employed in childhood, to stamp an appearance of physical beauty and proportion, only tend to arrest and destroy the natural progress of things, and to superinduce the effects of old age and decrepitude, in the most youthful subjects. "Legend must go before History, and Poetry must precede Criticism:" "In proportion," says another writer, "as criticism has become systematic, and

critics numerous, the powers of composition have in all ages and countries gradually declined"—This is true, and we have to lament that such is the state of things among us. The great men of the sixteenth century, would never have been what they were, had they stood in fear of any tribunal of Critics. However, as it is, if these writers would only become *coadjutors* in the cause of literature and science, with those who supply *original* matter, we might yet promise ourselves a rich harvest of literary glory; but the great misfortune is, that the critics are usually writers for *effect*, and rather than not display their own wit and acquirements, they do it at the expense of those whom they should uphold; they are moreover quite too full of false rule and system, and it is in allusion to this vile propensity of dullness, to tramel the efforts of genius, with its own leaden impositions, that the guardians of the literary wheel, are for ever more deprecating their functions. Fools should be "pulled from Wisdom's seat, who watch alone to cuff down new fledged merits, that would rise to nobler heights, making the grove harmonious."

We must necessarily, however, look abroad—into the cherished records of ages, that have rolled, not over the desert of the new, but the pliant soil, and variegated landscapes of the old world—where the footsteps of man, have been traced from the first rude impressions

of his great Progenitor, through the successive stages of every humanising art, every science that enlightens, and every moral that adorns—down to the present distant period, from the first commencement of the march of Time—when the Sun of intellectual illumination, posting to the meridian of its career, is hailed in gratulation by the sage, and worshipped by the savage—it is to the gardens of science and of art, if we would gather golden fruitage, and not to the unpruned wilderness, that the mind must direct its vision—the poet may indeed, find his cradled slumbers in the forest, but his manhood must commune with men, for human character and passion form his theme, and although, as before remarked, some of the greatest poets have appeared, at the most unenlightened periods of their several ages, others again, of equal merit, have flourished in times, when learning may be said to have become gigantic in her dimensions; Milton was the greatest polemic of his day, before whom Salmatius, one of the most learned men France ever has produced, retired in silent submission; and Shakspeare's mind, was necessarily benefitted by the wisdom introduced, by the great Fathers of the Reformation. Some modern Theorists maintain, however, that the general diffusion of literature, tends to weaken, or at least to repress—the original powers of the poet's mind —this effect however, we cannot but think, is produced

only upon minds not of the first order—Homer would most inevitably have been the same great poet, had he flourished at the most enlightened period of the age of Augustus or of Pericles; and as to the vain assumption, that the finest materials of the poetical system have been expended—and that, according to Dr. Young, the most original images have already been employed, by those who first explored the great field of nature—it may be observed, that genius is necessarily original, and it would be as absurd to suppose, that because in the pages of Homer, Milton, and Shakspeare, we find collected all the embellishments of which their poetry was susceptible, that nature has been thereby rendered threadbare and unprofitable, as to maintain, that the Helen of Zeuxis, monopolises all the beauty of the female world. With regard to our Columbian Parnassus, we have not as yet many gems and flowers to boast of, it stands cold and uncultivated in the bosom of the wilderness; Solitude and Silence are the guardian spirits of its sylvan home; the genii of the Cataract, and Prairie, repose their starry limbs upon its summit, worshipping the wonders of their unbounded reign; that it is vast in its resources, and fertile in its depths, we cannot but indulge in the proud belief, its golden treasures are unexplored however, but that they will one day be brought to light, is the prospect flatteringly held forth, by the language of a few,

whose voices have been faintly heard to murmur in the forest, cherishing the infant melody of days that are gone, in the pleasing hope of awakening yet, "a louder and a bolder strain;"—there is one name at least, of which America should be proud, but to the memory of *Clifton*, which should have been encircled with the verdure of the Amaranth, his country has proved ingrate—the powers of his genius, were as various, as they were brilliant and refined, strong, vivid, and not unfrequently sublime; dust has long since become the tomb of his mortality, but oblivion should never have been allowed to mantle around the creations of his mind; the times in which he lived, were inauspicious to the full development of his talents; the star of his muse was shrouded, and almost overwhelmed in the clouds that surrounded our political horizon—and the voice of his prophetic spirit, was lost amid the thunders of the tempest, that shook the pillars of our republic almost to their base—the glories of his mind, however, were too intrinsic not to survive the temporary eclipse under which they laboured; and now, that "danger's troubled night," is past—they shine out upon us in all their peculiar lustre—his Ode to Fancy, is replete with the most beautiful natural imagery—it unites the sweet simplicity of Goldsmith, with the classical purity and energy of Collins in his happiest hour, when "reposing by Elysian water-falls"—and his Occasional

Satire, evinces a felicitous vein of satirical humour, that would have graced the caustic pages of Pope or Gifford—it presents also in one passage an ingenious parody upon Parnel's beautiful tale of the Hermit—indeed the little volume comprising his Poems, that we have in our possession, bears ample testimony to the high poetical temperament of its author. England would have delighted in a Muse, that found in America, nothing but "ashes and a tomb"—for, although the Phœnix of the mind, will ever spring triumphant from the ashes of the body, yet, unless wooed to the bowers of literature and of song, it will become an unknown and solitary bird—it has been unfortunately thus with Clifton—political troubles, and the virulence of party rage, engrossed the attention of the times, and it was only perhaps in the occasional pauses of the storm, that the listening ear caught the vibrations of his Lyre—doomed to neglect, and the obscurity that attends it—his labours, while living, were unrequited, and his name—when dead—consigned to forgetfulness—well may his Spirit be heard to declare of Fame, what Shakspeare says of Honour,

> —— the mere word 's a slave—
> Debauch'd on ev'ry stone—on ev'ry grave,
> A lying trophy—and as oft is dumb,
> Where dust and damn'd oblivion are the tomb—
> Of "famed" bones indeed.

So little is the society of the Muses courted in our country, that many a page familiar to, and cherished by, the taste of Transatlantic readers, is appropriated in the soil where first it expanded, to the vilest uses of the vilest hands—The Romances of Brown, are as little known among us—as though they had been never written, or read as the productions of a foreign author—while the ponderous epics of Barlow, and Trumbull, obtruding themselves into notice, merely from the novelty of their huge proportions, are vaunted forth as specimens of classical immortality—and glimmered through by idiots, who mistake the light of the type, for the illuminations of genius; not but that there are in the Columbiad, many smooth, and even beautiful verses, but taken as a whole, it is the most grotesque performance, with the exception of one or two modern specimens of the epic style—that ever emanated in a serious shape from the pen. It is humbling to see, how a writer, once possessed of that "damning fame that Dunciads give"—without at the same time being altogether blotted from the chronicles of authorship—flaunting in gaudy, but flimsy, and tattered vestments, will attract a host of buzzing insects, that dwell around him, merely because, from the *imposthumation* of the materials of which he is composed, they are enabled to gorge his congenial putrefaction—while the firm transparency of genius they avoid, or

light only on the surface, to soil its beauty—murmuring at the impenetrability, that defies the mining tendency of their efforts.

We are lamentably deficient in this country, in the cultivation of a poetical taste, and our worthy Critics, so far from exerting the powers that usually seem implied in the office of literary censors, in forming, and cherishing one—for reasons best known among themselves—evidently concur, with most laudable unanimity, either in condemning, for what they sagely conceive to be their heresies of thought, and style, the few, who may occasionally present themselves as candidates for the honours of the Parnassian Laurel, bidding them "go hence and be no more seen"—or else, where perhaps they accidentally stumble upon some little indication of poetical phrenzy, preserve a religious silence, not corresponding indeed in time, with that which was known in heaven, for the space of *two minutes*—but, placing their hands upon their hearts, their lips become sealed, as by the influence of a spell, of no less potency than that, which is represented in the Eastern Tale, as closing upon the powers of the victims of Eblis—now really, if we may presume to point out, what we humbly conceive to be the obligations, necessarily imposed, by the station, which these sublime Worthies maintain, in our little republic of letters, we would in the first place, remark,

that the pages over which they preside, should be so conducted, as to enable us, to regard and consult them, as the literary chronicles of the times—presenting its mental "form and pressure" to the age; they should watch with a steady, and minute attention, the slow, and almost imperceptible progression, of Improvement on the "Car of Time"—reporting to the solicitude of those, whose feelings are enlisted in the great cause of Literature, the successful achievements that may have attended the march of Intellect; and in the next place, not pursuing the spirit of the Napoleon Policy, publicly announcing some disastrous defeat, for the purpose of enhancing the value of victory—they should regard "more in sorrow than in anger," those literary abortions, that are not unfrequently the result of contingency, rather than of any inherent malformation of the mental system—

> "The tear that is wip'd with a little address,
> May be follow'd perhaps by a smile."

And as in attempting to weed out the errors, and literary vices of an author, we sometimes eradicate his beauties, so, in the practical illustrations, of the efficacy of their penal code, in punishing, and restraining crimes, that would tend to clog the literary wheel—the Critics, not unfrequently defeat the legitimate purposes, they

should aim at achieving—and either render the more worthy candidates for the distinction of their favours, callous to the influence of those powers, that are abused by the most wanton application, or else, repress those energies, that disdain the fostering hand, which has been rendered contemptible, in having been so often employed in the infant task, of "breaking butterflies upon the wheel"—it has been truly said, that "the knowledge of our disease, is half the cure," and if these literary Hydras—not such in point of power, but of hideousness, and the inveteracy of their existence, which nothing less than the cauterising brand of a Hercules can destroy—like wise physicians, would only report to the patient the nature of his complaint, without proceeding at once, to the most violent use, of the most violent applicants—how many a frame of beautiful proportions, might be shielded from the mining ravages of a secret power, whose progress might be arrested, simply by the "patient's administering to himself;" instead of this, however, these deformed monsters of the Hesperian garden, their gorgonean appetites not gorged, by the daily carcases of the dull they devour, are for ever more snarling at those, who are alike proof against their terrors, and their charms, the latter, ever being held forth in cases, where they dread the lash, and are compelled to fawn: the fact is however, literary Orthodoxy may thunder its

anathemas till dooms-day, against the fanatic intolerance, of this self-constituted tribunal of Inquisitorial Criticism, the mania is not endemial to any soil, and is therefore hopeless and without cure—for these writers, are legitimate disciples, of the Warburtonian school of human philosophy, having clearly inherited, and strongly imbibed, the notions of their great master, as to the sources of moral obligation; and it would be altogether vain, for any one to attempt to preach them, into a renunciation, of the narrow and selfish system of their creed: we may tell them, that the most enlightened, and indeed the only true idea of this feeling of obligation, rests upon a perception of utility, at least, if not upon a moral sense, triumphantly they reply, that their conduct, can alone be swayed, by influence of some presiding *superior* will to their own, which not existing, they have no disposition to have their moral, which involves their free agency, destroyed, or at least shackled, by interposition of any other motives to action, than such as are self suggested; the canons also, of their critical discipline, subject to the imperfection that attaches itself, in a greater or lesser degree, to all human laws and institutions, as the wisdom of legislators may abound, or be deficient—are found to deal alone, in the infliction of *punishments*, and never in the distribution of *rewards*, consequently, the Poets, when they indulge in visions of

heaven, are not the idle dreamers, they have been generally esteemed to be—for, these legislative critics themselves, from the sage conviction, that there must necessarily exist some state of reward, for the virtues of the good, and the merits of the wise—and this state, not being found upon *earth*, are led of course, to point out an hereafter, where the disconsolate Bard, may meet with that atonement for his wrongs, and sufferings, which was denied him, in this vale of tears; but a very natural and momentous question, here presents itself—how will things go with the *critics*—what will be their fate, who have been the framers of those laws, that are designed to apply alone to offences—clearly, the *reverse* of that of the poets, for having rewarded themselves *here*, for the arduous duties of their station, in *punishing* the latter, their day and place of account is of course to *come*, not being supposed, to be altogether free from crime themselves, though professedly its punishers—alas—what a prospect! the Poets surely, upon reflection have, no reason to complain, and it is seriously to be hoped, in justice, that they will never henceforth be heard, to murmur against the critics. We had occasion to remark, a few leaves back, that the demands made, by the taste of the reading community of our country, for the pages of the Poet, were but "few, and far between;" the disadvantages, consequent upon this almost total and ge-

neral disrelish for works of imagination, that necessarily accrue to their authors, are at once obvious and unfortunate—the more *genuine* and beautiful flowers of the Parnassian grove, are either unsought for, though known to exist, or if accidentally discovered, neglected, as fantastic exotics, merely because the eye of the observer has been confined in its range, over the beauties of intellectual nature, and accustomed to the growth only of certain noxious weeds—whose qualities when in that state of decomposition, which is the necessary consequence of an impure mixture—become poisonous to the soil in which at one time, they flourished in pernicious vegetation. Clifton has but too truly said, alluding to the literary, and not the natural inclemency and barrenness of our country, that it was a land, "where genius sickened and where fancy died"—this remark even after a lapse of twenty years, will still admit of the most serious application to America—we are almost tempted to think, that "there is something more than natural in this, if philosophy could find it out." West, Allston, and Leslie, had they continued to breath beneath the suffocating mists of our cloudy atmosphere, would have drooped and perished like the plantains of the desert—the *tannen* from their nature flourish best upon the loftiest eminence, and *genius* will grow the same, ever requiring a "kindred fire to keep its bright-

ness bright;" indeed it is humbling to observe the almost daily instances that present themselves of the total absence in the people of America, of that noblest perhaps of all feelings, the pride that arises from the consciousness of *intellectual* superiority; politically as a nation, we are naturally jealous of our civil rights—but this is a principle inherent in the nature of the veriest losel of creation—nay, it betrays itself as conspicuously in the elements of brute matter, as in the bosom of the sage; the feeling of personal liberty is not confined to man alone, it extends and illustrates its influence through every grade of animated being—the Indian or the African, whose ideas do not extend beyond the rivers and mountains of his home, yet exults in the buoyancy of unshackled freedom—lulled to his slumbers by the breezes of the forest, he blesses the stars that light him to repose, and hails the sun that dawns upon his life, as designed alone to warm, invigorate, and cherish him; the empire of Literature, is like the empire of Woman, one of softness and of sorcery; but in America, the cold abstractions of the statesman, and the mercenary speculations of the artizan, embrace the extension of our mental vision, and bind the horizon of its aspirations. It is folly to preach about national infancy—the world itself was in its infancy, in one sense—when the star of Poesy, encircling the morning freshness of the brow of Chau-

ser, led him forth in the blushes of a young Aurora, to shed his day upon the slumbering energies of creation, steeped in the oblivious night of ages.

But as a *people*, we are not, and never were, in a state of infancy—our birth has been coeval, and our national progress the same, with that of the governments of the old world, from which we differ, only in the newness and freedom of our political constitution—in every other respect, we are almost one and the same people—and the present dearth of literary talent, which pervades our country, and for which at least we are conspicuous—is altogether the consequence of our *mercantile* and *agricultural* pursuits, at least of the *absorbing devotion* with which these are followed and encouraged; it has been said, that where the national spirit tends to the advancement of any *one* particular art, a spring and impetus is thereby given to *every other*—but the present state of America, would seem to deny the truth of this assertion; if indeed, it be not considered as a singular exception to a general rule—and in fact, it baffles all theory and contradicts all experience—for while the mercantile and agricultual arts, and even the more vicious refinements of polished life, are encouraged and carried to their topmost height—the interests of Literature are allowed to languish and decline. Poetry and Painting are almost entirely neglected. Utility is no

longer the hand-maid to genius—and we may prose to all eternity about our national infancy, as the cause of our literary deficiency, no such cause exists; but the fact is, as long as the lands of the agriculturist continue to be the only soil cultivated, and the speculations of the merchant, the only efforts of mind deemed worthy of attention, so long must we remain in our present state of literary nonage. We do not pretend to say, that commerce and agriculture should be neglected, or undeserving of strong national support, and that the fine arts should be alone attended to—but there is such a thing as carrying these former pursuits *too far*—among the ancients the least *commercial*, were the most *enlightened* nations. Rome had no commerce, but she extended her arts and arms, to almost every corner of the world. Carthage had but little, if any, Literature, but her commercial strides were colossian, and she perished of her own enormous weight. She neglected the cultivation of letters, and devoted herself exclusively to *traffic;* and traffic destroyed her. In America, there exist no proper stimuli to literary exertion—indeed, under what *strictly republican* form of government has Literature ever flourished? or rather, have not her interests been usually better understood, and more attentively regarded by an enlightened Aristocracy—tempered even by a moderate spirit of liberty and justice—than by any other

form of the political constitution? Athens, which under Pericles, was no longer a democracy, became the literary emporium of the world; while under the more simple administration of her other consuls, her intellectual soil was comparatively barren. Rome beneath the plain garb of republicanism—though like Greece she never enjoyed much *practical* liberty, as a late able historian remarks, with all the *theoretical* freedom of her government—exhibited features of very little attraction: the outlines of her countenance may have been bold and striking, but wanting in expression, at least in that expression which is communicated by mind; it betrayed *fiery elements*, but the grace of *intellect* was reserved for the age of her Cæsars—under the second and three last of whom, she produced some of her greatest minds: the Commentaries on the Gallic wars, written by the first of these, clearly prove that the spirits of Literature and Tyranny, are not incompatible with each other. Modern Italy, under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, gave birth to Dante, and Ariosto, Tasso and Alfieri; and the crowns of France and England are studded with the stars of intellect. It is said that the interests of Liberty and Literature, have been ever found to be synonymous, and that as they flourish—so—they decline, together: and yet they were far from being united in the person of Rome's *first* emperor; and Brutus and Quintilian lived apart—at

different periods—it was not necessary to their country's welfare, that they should have been coadjutors in her cause—the former rose against the very power that fostered the latter; which would seem to demonstrate that the mind of the one, declined beneath the influence of that atmosphere—which proved favourable to the growth and expansion of that of the other; that Literature may exist where Liberty does not, and *vice versa*—the clamours made by the people of Rome, during her consular or government, succeeded in introducing a spirit of greater Liberty—if indeed, the privilege of the mass to do as they please, and to confound freedom with faction, intrigue, and violence—be made to constitute the blessing of enlightened Liberty—but with this equalization of rights among the Patrician and Plebeian ranks, during the democratic administration at Rome, was brought about a more vigorous organization of the *military* system—and of that alone, *Literature* was far from deriving any benefit from the change: as a proof of this, when, after the conquest of Syracuse, Marcellus attempted to introduce the Fine Arts into Italy—he was violently opposed by Cato the Censor, the stanch advocate of liberty and republicanism—this inexorable democrat, whom Virgil very properly makes one of the judges of Hell—was very apprehensive that Grecian Literature would destroy Roman Liberty!—It would seem

then that the interests of the two causes are not exactly of an identity, which is to be lamented; but such are the conditions of life, our blessings are but "few, and far between." Man is seldom allowed to enjoy much happiness unmixed with pain; a good effect not unfrequently proceeds from a bad cause, and the contrary is as often the case—vice has some attractive graces, as virtue is sometimes cold and repulsive. The flowers of Literature frequently bloom with most luxuriance beneath the foot of the tyrant, because the soil upon which he treads, destined to give birth to other, and more vigorous vegetation, is necessarily *fertile;* and the lordly oak is proud of the flattery of the rose and the vine—he shelters them, not exactly for themselves perhaps, but because they tend to grace and beautify his reign: the effect, however, is the same, whatever be the design—and thus it is, that the interests of Literature are generally better attended to, under an aristocratical or monarchical form of government, than under any other—there is a brilliancy and summer glow infused in the atmosphere that surrounds a court, which warms and invigorates every thing within its influence; and as in the natural world, the same sun, that elicits the growth of the most noxious, gives life and luxuriance to the most wholesome plants, so, the lustre that encircles a diadem, while it seduces him who wears it, from warming and

dazzling his brain, to trample frequently upon the *personal*, yet leads him at the same time, to foster and protect, the *intellectual* rights of man. Science and the Sword, go hand in hand before him, and unite in completing and perfecting his achievements; his object being, strictly speaking, to *triumph*, and mere brute violence can never signalise, but rather tends to cast a shade upon his efforts—what a contrast of character, between a Cæsar, a Frederick, and a Napoleon, and a Nero, a Claudius, and a Caligula, or an Alaric. It is a saying of Political science, that the bare "trappings of a monarchy," would be sufficient, thoroughly to adorn and equip a republic—that the offals of the one, would be adequate to the entire support of the other; and this is true, and it is for this reason, that Science and the Arts, are prone to take shelter beneath the patronage of the great. Men must be rewarded for the trouble of exertion, and although the *breath* of Fame sustains their memory after death, they cannot live upon it, like Gossamers, during *life*. Locke has truly said, that "no one ever found mines of gold and silver in Parnassus; it is a pleasant air, but a barren soil." Certain forms of government, are not less distinguished by their spirit of substantial patronage, than by their ceremonial institutions, and practices that tend to stimulate ambition, and excite emulation—a purely republican government, from the

very simplicity of its nature, seems to imply the total absence of every thing of the kind—their utility however, is remarkably illustrated by Greek and Roman History; the Ancilia of Mars, and the Vestal Fire, constituted the palladium of their military and social life; and their sacred institutions gave birth to all those heroic achievements, that signalised their existence; their Mythology, which, after all the conjectures of the learned as to its origin—may be traced, as it has been remarked, to the natural passions of the human heart—was the great source of every thing that was splendid in the Literature and Arms of Greece. In America, the stoical scheme of "supplying our wants by lopping off our desires," has long since been introduced, and appears to be productive of much happy complacency—the candidate for the Parnassian laurel, has to struggle with peculiar difficulties; unaided and alone, if he succeeds in overcoming them, it is very well—if he fails, it is equally well. We forget that although it is impossible to *repress* the flight of the Eagle, yet may the majesty of his wing be *lost*, when no eye is *turned* upon him. The unlettered Indian, who rejoices in the freedom of his rights, without understanding the rights of his freedom, yet, "smit with the love," "delights in the melody of song:" the peasant of the Scotish Highlands, the venetian Gondoletteer, and the hunter of the Alps, inherit from their

sires and transmit to their offspring the inspirations of the Lyre; the Tree of knowledge in our country, has arrived at that lamentable maturity that abounds in leaves, but is barren of fruitage, because the soil in which it has taken root, has been neglected and exposed to the storms of popular commotion, which however, they may pass harmless over the obscurity of the Osier, never fail to rive the giant branches of the Oak. There is at the same time, a littleness and frivolity disgustingly apparent in the dispositions of the few, who affect to admire, and cultivate a taste for the productions of art, which from habitual indulgence, has become fatally confirmed—the *female* part of our community, who never fail to make the greatest possible display in words of their acquirements, whatever they may be, or, however unimportant, in cases where the slightest pretension to mind and taste, may be with some appearance of consistency maintained, and who, among their other manifold affectations, invariably profess to admire most what they least understand, are so devoted to modern Novel-reading, indiscriminately gorging all the trash that daily emenates from the labouring press, in the seductive shape of a Love tale, or some other form equally sickening and grotesque, that it is altogether hopeless to expect from *them* any rational agency in the cause of good learning, or any advancement given to the arts from a steady patronage of its more serious and enlight-

ened departments: we have been led to notice this class of readers, because in the literary societies of the old countries, they are allowed to possess a degree of influence; which, when properly exercised, tends perhaps to the happiest results—but rather than that these delicate Sentimentalists, should employ their leisure hours in unbracing the sinewy vigour of manly Literature, by unremitting dalliance with the antic Dwarfs and little arch Adonises of "the primrose path" of intellect, we really would be disposed to witness the introduction of even more than the eastern economy of domestic life among our fair countrywomen, dooming them to the dreariness of literary celibacy; or seriously advise them resolutely to resume, and patiently to endure the sylvan occupations of their great progenitress—not exactly to become "hewers of wood," but certainly "drawers of water, and tenders of the rose." That we possess even at the present period of our history, sources within ourselves, which are capable of supplying his materials to the poet, no one perhaps will deny who looks back to the Indian Antiquities of our country; lords of a boundless empire, they have flourished for ages in the freedom of the desert—their origin as unknown and mysterious as the awful rites of their religion—standing upon the first invasion of the white man, like guardian genii of the new world, as wild and majestic as the moun-

tains of their domain: the visions of the Utopian never disclosed realms of more blissful creation, the barrier of a mighty and trackless ocean, rearing its billowy front between the gorgeous pillar of the East, and the ivied column of the West, towered like a Spirit that preserved two starry worlds asunder; their mountains, rivers, and lakes, corresponding in sublimity to the vastness of the scene; the wild man of America, wandered like the Judean of the wilderness, and wondered at his being: and then, as if taught by the wisdom and the meekness of Him, with whom in the solitude of nature he must have held communion, upon the first advances of his foe, retired within the grandeur of his soul, and disdained to oppose the littleness of man; like him, he has had his garments rent, his spirit scoffed at, and his frame torn upon the rack of hostile inhumanity—he offered them a covenant of peace, and they rejected it with scorn; he asked for drink and they gave him wormwood; like him he lives a solitary man, spurned at in life, unhonoured in his fall, and forgotten in his grave—but while we admire the picturesque life and heroic character of the Indian, while we glow with enthusiasm at the unequalled display of the many noble qualities, that mark and dignify his nature; the unshrinking fortitude, the generous magnanimity, and the steady fidelity of his feelings, we cannot but regard these splendid quali-

ties in the abstract, unconnected with any familiar insight into the character, and unassociated with any knowledge of the peculiarities and habits of the mind which, in their practical exertion, they seem to illustrate and crown; we are scarcely, if at all conscious, of any of that sympathy in the fortunes of the Indian, which is found to bind man in fellowship with man—we venerate the prowess of the Lion, and admire the ingenuity of the Beaver, while we would not hesitate at the same time, to destroy either the one or the other; because, notwithstanding they are endowed with those very qualities we so much respect in civilized man, yet no rational communion being found to exist between them and ourselves, we cannot be supposed to be interested in their fates—but on the contrary are accustomed to regard them in fear and distrust; and it is this very feeling, pervading all our speculations upon the subject of Indian character, which necessarily places it in distant perspective.

We may be familiar with their external forms of life, without being able to analyse or refer them to any acknowledged principles of our being; we may become acquainted with their habits of action and of thought, but are not allowed to penetrate beyond their surface; we may occasionally indeed have glimpses even of the inward man, but the revealing is momentary and alto-

gether equivocal—the vision closes in instant darkness, and we become sensible of having gathered nothing but the shadows of twilight; it is this impenetrable veil of mystery, mantling the temple of an Indian mind, which denies all access to the inner apartments of the fabric, where his awful spirit brooding its dark vigils, sits throned in its world of clouds, and wrapt in the solitude of its dreary desolation—we admire the bold and striking outlines of the building, but know nothing of its internal construction—all avenues to access are barred against us, a voice tells us to "behold," but no seal uncloses, and we are not bid to "come and see." The classical proportions of the Indian frame, the picturesque beauties of his sylvan life, and many of the features even of his eventful history—however tinged by the purple hue of savage ferocity and crime, may be displayed no doubt with striking effect upon the canvass of the artist, in all the magic of his colourings, but cannot charm or interest, however encircled by the glowing inspiration of the Poets page; that is, if as we humbly conceive, the legitimate object of all genuine poetry, be to rouse and convulse into an intense existence, the slumbering elements and dormant sympathies of the soul; and this effect can only be produced by subjecting us to the influence of powers, that we acknowledge as centred in beings constituted like ourselves, impelled to

action by the same feelings and motives, that lead all men alike to infamy or renown, as they may be greatly or ignobly tempered. The character of the Indian, is so completely the result of the peculiar habits of his life, that we really cannot attribute to him any superior degree of original excellence; his insensibility to pain, is the consequence of a great compactness of physical organization, and the solemnity and even melancholy of his disposition, the effect of his wild and desolate existence; necessity is the parent of all his virtues and energies of character; bravery and a love of distinction, is not with him so much a sentiment, as a wild ambition of superior savage ferocity. Property among them, confers no distinction, and the only means by which the Indian can arrive at this—as there is an inherent propensity in most men to rule—is by displaying higher elements of fierceness and inhumanity; when we see greatness of soul, exhibiting itself under temptations to selfish aggrandizement, and surrounded by all the little vices and miserable corruptions of society, we naturally suppose a superior degree of mental elevation; but when the display of those qualities necessary to an important trust—is made the *condition* upon which it is to be conferred, we cannot wonder in such a case, at their exhibition—true it is, as we have had occasion to remark, that we must admire those energies of pow-

er, that are usually implied in the aspirations of a gigantic ambition, or any other sentiment of the soul, that is represented as boundless in its conceptions; but unless the subject over whom this resistless agency be supposed to preside, be portrayed as made up of the same elements, influenced by the same contingencies, and affected by the same vicissitudes of time that act upon ourselves, we may indeed admit the cold emotions of wonder and astonishment, but can never be melted and subdued by those warm gushes of sympathetic feeling, that are elicited by the successes or the reverses of beings, in whose fortunes we become identified, from having been made to feel, value, and understand the qualities that mark and electrify their natures: our fears, wishes, and expectations, become necessarily roused and enlisted in behalf of the destinies of Achilles or Macbeth, while we shudder at the preternatural terrors of Milton's hero; for although the progress of the three be marked by the blood and sufferings of our fellow creatures, yet the consciousness of our own liability to the frailties and misfortunes of the two former, irresistably compels us to that communion with their spirits, which infallibly leads us to take some interest in their lives and fortunes, and to become in some degree affected by the events that assail them; while in consequence of the immense distance that is placed between us and the lat-

ter, from the opposition of contrary natures, we are cut off from all opportunities or inducements for entering into a participation of his feelings and fortunes—we must ourselves be first subjected to the influence of those feelings that we would value, before we can possibly be supposed to form an estimate of them—it is this natural principle of our natures, which leads us to sympathise with those about us, as they may be affected by the prosperities, or the adversities of life; we know that they are creatures constituted like ourselves, whose hearts weep at the same afflictions, and are lit up by the same happiness, that may be incident to ourselves; that philanthropy of sentiment, which bewails those general ills that await human nature, is too philosophically moral, to be brought to bear upon the warm, and individual creations of the Poet; and it is only of this vague emotion, that we are sensible in glancing over those pages of history, that teem with disgusting pictures of human depravity, of the sufferings of nations, whose ills have been engendered in the bosom of their own barbarity, and superstition; or, which spring from the vices of luxurious, and consequently corrupted civilization—while the mind expands and sublimates at the glorious spectacle of a brave and hardy people, struggling against the oppressions of wanton tyranny, and monopolising power—the ultimate destinies of the lat-

ter constitute the proudest and the noblest theme of the Poet's inspiration; but our Indian history, presents no examples of this nature, at least not upon that broad and dignified scale which would challenge the powers of the pen—and while their military life, to which alone we look for actions worthy of commemoration, and subjects suited to the dignity and high vocation of the Muse, is thus confessedly barren of events of any magnitude, their civil existence we would naturally suppose, altogether unworthy of the serious attention of the Poet—a state of peace is one at best, of quiet inaction, presenting no objects of interest to any mind, but that of the historian or the philosopher; the civil concerns of any power in the management of its internal organization and improvement, offer but little variety of matter, and that adapted to the speculations only of the legislator—the flowers of poesy, are never found to bloom beside the path of the Magistrate or the Merchant, and droop and wither in the pestilential atmosphere, and hot-houses of city stagnation; the genius of Commerce is too rugged in his aspect to attract the smiles, or elicit the favours of the Muse; but if the domestic occupations even of a civilized power, be found deficient in that dignity and interest required of the poetical Theme, how plainly impossible would it be, to work upon the same materials drawn from the internal sources of a race of barbarous

Indians? We feel for the unhappy African, when torn from his companions and native soil—but who would think of converting his sad fortunes, his captivity and after bondage, under the iron scourge of his oppressors—into the form of a poetical Tale? In attempting an Indian subject, the writer is necessarily subjected to disadvantages peculiar to his theme; he finds himself compelled from the obscurity and oblivion, under which that nation lie buried from the attention of the world—and even from the knowledge of the greater part of people of our own country—in order to elucidate his narrative, and to preserve that appearance of keeping, as 'tis termed, which is essentially requisite in all delineations of character, he is obliged we say in consequence of this, to enter into those minute details of domestic and individual life, which are tedious at best, but absolutely necessary, where the main action is not such as to imply, or sufficiently hint at, the nature of those constituent ingredients that form a perfect whole; this species of formal episode, is at all times and in all poetry rather dry and uninteresting, it produces the same unfortunate effect, with those laboured elucidations of the text of an author—not generally read or understood—which *direct* the reader where to smile at a witticism, or enter into the scope and spirit of a sarcasm; the effect which might otherwise have been produced, is thus destroyed; but in

no case, are these passages explanatory of peculiar habits and ideas, more unprofitably waded through, than where they refer to the manners and civil employments of a nation of Savages. In books of Travels, we may read these accounts with some degree of interest, as furnishing our minds with the personal history of a portion of our race; but really to encircle the rude brow of a swarthy Indian, with a garland from Parnassus, is indeed like casting pearl to swine. Upon the whole therefore, we cannot but believe, that although the majesty of Man, reigning in the nakedness of the desert, be a striking emblem of the grandeur of Universal Nature, although the primitive simplicity, and open ingenuousness of the Indian Aborigines of America, afford flattering evidences of the original purity of our present corrupted nature, and so far at least, merit the grateful meditations of the wise and good—although the melancholy remnant of their once unspotted race, even at this distant period from the happy days of their fathers, still preserve some of the many noble traits, that stamped and individualized them as a people—although the realms over which, like Spirits they preside, be the grandest that ever witnessed the presence, or echoed to the voice of man—yet even all these dazzling assemblages of natural and moral beauty and sublimity, are not alone, nor sufficiently adapted to the construction of any bold and lasting edi-

fice, that poesy would rear. Thus then if the only source which has been recognized among us, as supplying materials for the Poet, be found deficient, upon examination, in the richer and more congenial elements, over which the Muse delights to shed the warmth and brilliancy of her hues—where must the eye of Inspiration turn for objects, that may gratify its vision? The answer to this question involves the discussion of another point, that perhaps merits some attention; we conceive it of little moment, as before remarked, whether the theme of the Poet be gathered from memory or imagination—that is, from facts relative to his own country, or whether his subject be fictitious; fictions is perhaps better calculated to furnish him with materials than history, or recorded events of any kind; and indeed the Poet of the present day of our country, must necessarily have recourse from our want of a poetical antiquity, either to the fables of his own imagination, or to those that remain upon the records of times, that gave birth to the many coloured events of the old world; in either of these cases however, he must still look abroad from his characters and scenes, which cannot be referred for centuries to come, to the moral and physical constitution of America; after the lapse of that time, we may set about the business of forming a national Literature; the reason is at once obvious, in order to the crea-

tion of such a Literature, we must turn our attention to those resources, that may be afforded by our history and institutions; but these do not as yet present us with materials adapted to the purposes of poetry; because the events connected with the former, are of so recent a date, as to reject the embellishments of fancy—and the latter are unassociated with any of the peculiarities and remembrances of a past period, marked by striking or important features; in the morning light of our present existence, there are no fables which the invention of the Poet might supply, that would be recognized as ever having arisen among us—given birth to in the popular system of our moral or political Creed; there is no mystic curtain between the twilight visions of a past age, and the dawn of the present, which the Poet may draw aside, to commune with the spirits of another, and a bygone world; and it is evident, that only in the fables and popular superstitions of a people, can we trace any of the peculiarities of the national mind, tinged by the distinguishing colours of practices and events, that relate and belong exclusively to itself; and it is only where the imaginative works of a nation, are made to bear the stamp of those characterising lineaments, which enable us to recognize the original from which they have been copied, that it comes gradually into the possession of a national Literature; where there has not been a suffi-

cient space elapsing between the period of a people's birth, and any specified point of time succeeding, which may have afforded room and materials, for the expansion of some system of beliefs and practices, to which the Poet may be allowed to refer, and to which he may make what additions he pleases, no nation can expect to accumulate any large and important body of Literature; the only method of supplying this present want, we had been inclined to think—which is merely that natural deficiency in youth, of the wisdom and experience of age, incident to the moral world—would be to introduce into works of foreign fiction, those images and illustrations, that might be gathered from the natural resources of the Poet's country; but it is evident, that as there are certain traits in the national character of some countries, more bold, striking, and poetical than those of others—and as the Poet is not at liberty, to transfer these from a people to whom they apply, to any other—in order to preserve a consistency and keeping in his general design, there must be a correspondence of parts to the whole, and the ornaments must be such as naturally grow out of the subject; which would not be the case were he to mingle contrarieties; and to represent the Arab reposing on a Mountain, or an inhabitant of the Alps in an Indian Cabin of North America, would be to contradict experience, and to violate the laws of all poetical li-

cence; thus then, although the American Bard, is at liberty to retrace the gradual progress of Time, and while he may allow his reflection to examine those materials and images of things and events, which his memory may have treasured up and preserved, from the general wreck of hours, and his fancy either to revive and refreshen the colourings, which in their birth they may have exhibited, or to mould them to its purposes, and adorn them with new beauties of its own—he is not yet authorized to fable wonders of the new, or grace records of the old world, except they be exhibited in a corresponding foreign drapery; he may not create a heaven of Houries tripping over the green velvet sward, or beckoning from the luxuriant bowers of a Western Prairie. The wonders of South America, we think present a more dazzling and encouraging prospect to the eye of the American Poet, than any thing to be gathered from the past or present history of his own hemisphere; its natural and civil resources both abound in golden treasure, in which he may find his account to lie; the conquests of Cortes and Pizarro, and the wars of Montezuma are no less fertile in the materials, than the vallies and cataracts of the Cordileras are found, studded with the embellishments of Poetry; the Indian Antiquities of the South, too, are of a more gorgeous and fascinating colouring, than those of their brethren of the North—for

ages, that passed over an unchanging wilderness of trees and streams in the northern, in the southern continent, embalmed and consecrated the memory of nations that have passed away; traces of whose former existence are to be met with in almost every region of that unknown world—it is the twilight of this Antiquity, hovering over the mouldering towers and cloudy palaces of a mysterious race, whose very name and language have been swept into nothingness with themselves, that imparts a venerable shade and a soul-thrilling gloom to every image, associated with the visions in which fancy endeavours to hold communion, with the spirits of the departed; and it is in this faded light, that the muse of Poesy delights to weave the tissue of her dreams—she delights to wander through the vistas of a fairy land—and is proud of displaying the glories of her starry lineaments, in some congenial world of shadows and of fables—but disdains to come in contact with the dull realties of "the ignorant present time;" and refuses to shed the grace and purity of her ethereal halos, around the gross dwellings of corrupted humanity. But very little reverence is paid now-a-days to the old age of Poesy; having employed the vigours of her youth, in the cause of human morals and philosophy, the narrations of her fond remembrance, now that she is no longer subservient to the wants of selfish man, are regarded as the

frenzy of a distempered mind—consigned to the solitude of her mournful retrospections, she is cast forth to wander in the wilderness, like some pernicious spirit with whom man fears to hold communion—in her own regions of primeval wildness and luxuriance, she drank of the fountain of Divine Love—and all was moonlight sorcery and beauty—but immerced in the bitter waters of these evil times—her affections have become changed and almost callous to the suggestions of her heavenly nature—the only remaining traces of her once peerless form, survive in the cherishing ardour and devotion of a Byron—the dark but glorious inspirations of his soul, seem to rouse and reanimate her being; and as Liberty and Literature, wept over the ashes of Brutus and Quintilian, and perished in their fates—the solitary Genius of song, will weave her last garland upon the monument of Byron.

After all however, that we have been saying upon the subject of American Criticism, it is not perhaps so difficult to account for its silence, in regard to our Literature generally—more particularly, productions eminating from the South: there is unfortunately a civil and literary line of demarkation, not less conspicuous and established than the natural one, existing between North and South; our New England Brethren, stand particularly opposed to ourselves in almost every circumstance naturally calculated to create a division

of interests, between any two people; their Institutions—their habits of feeling and reflection, in some degree the result of the former, and their political interests and sentiments, all tend to give a bias to their lives and characters, alike unfavourable to our existence, national as well as literary; and this feeling of jealous individuality is not confined to a few, but pervades all classes alike. Their representatives in our National Assembly, are not content with simply pursuing the interests of their Constituents, but evidently exert themselves in strong opposition to our own: what their object can be, we confess ourselves somewhat at a loss to imagine, as they cannot be blind to the truth, that their interests are identified with our own as a nation, and that the existence of each state, is synonimous with that of the Union. The Republic of Letters, seems not less divided between contending interests: rather than aid and encourage the development of American talent, it is disgusting to perceive the system adhered to by our northern literati; *silence* in regard to our Literature *generally*, that of the South particularly, and loud and obstrusive clamours about English genius: and what makes this literary spirit of Anti-Americanism still more contemptible, is, that it exerts itself not in any *original speculations*, upon the subject of European productions, but is satisfied with the miserable task of retailing *second-hand* Criticism—

there is one little gaudy production, which devotes its pages with most laudable enthusiasm and inveteracy exclusively to the service of British Literature: the *Spirit of English Magazines,* openly declares its purport in its very title page: all the trash which laborious dullness is capable of collecting out of every Quarterly and Monthly Journal, infesting severally the different parts of England, is periodically thrust into this little gaudy volume, whose surface is as conspicuous for its tinsel glitter, as its substance, if substance it has any, is worth less from its imposthumation, and treacherous from the chaotic arrangement of its materials: this *mania* taste for Foreign Literature, is so prevalent throughout our northern Atlantic cities, that like other deadly diseases it has last become contagious—and the effects of its influence—extended even to our Western woods, have become apparent in a journal lately projected in that quarter of our country. The Western Review, upon its very first appearance, clearly indicated symptoms of the same infection —we naturally looked into this work, for some account of the state of Literature in the West, but instead of any such intelligence, we were sickened with the same miserable echo, which had first resounded in the North—caught from European Critics, and faithfully transmitted to every part of America, where sufficient hollowness was found to reverb its answerings. The Port Fo-

lio and Analectic Magazine,* are alike zealous coadjutors in the cause of English Poetry and Learning. Indeed there is not one truly American Journal, to be met

* This Journal has lately undergone a change of *form*, and *name*—now the "Literary Gazette;" whether its *substance* will become purified from the dross of ignorance and prejudice, is yet to be made manifest—the Editors, however, still appear to be afraid of standing upon their *own* footing; they propose it seems to adopt the plan, upon which the *London* Literary Gazette is conducted—*England*, nothing but *England!*

Britaniam! Britaniam! primus conclamat Americanus.
Italeam! Italeam! primus conclamat Achates. ÆN. III.

Behold *Britannia* in prospect lies,
Behold *Britannia* salutes our eyes—
At once a thousand tongues repeat the *name*,
And hail *Britannia* with *loud* acclaim.

Behold Jerusalem in prospect lies,
Behold Jerusalem salutes their eyes—
JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

We cannot help noticing here the sad inconsistency of sentiment and conduct, into which the Editor of the *National Gazette* has been betrayed, by his affected contempt for *all American Poetry*—in his "Appeal," Mr. Walsh presents himself a bold and zealous advocate, of his country's cause, literary and political; while in the pages of his Gazette, he unfortunately contradicts his own sentiments and assertions, rendering somewhat equivocal as to *design*—the sincerity, that imparted dignity and impressiveness to his Appeal. The Editor is surely at variance with himself, when in the latter work he labours in refutation of *British calumny*, while in the former, he incautiously allows a reflection to escape him, which is in itself a *direct libel*, upon the literary character of the country he pretended to vindicate—we say a direct libel, because, that reflection tends to undervalue what, in opposition to Mr. Walsh, *we*

with in the United States: the North American Review itself, one of the most able works of its kind, is nevertheless extremely partial in its views of the literary

cannot but think deserving of the high estimation of every *American* at least—namely, the Poesy of our country—when Mr. Walsh affirms, in opinion we believe with *certain other literary worthies of the North*, that America has not yet produced one Poet worthy of note, and indeed that *all* American Poetry, was but a collection of *barrenness* and *trash*—had these enlightened gentry forgotten, or were they ignorant of, the performances of Clifton, Pierpoint, and Trumbull? but even admitting for a moment the truth of Mr. Walsh's assertion, was it well from the lips of an *American?* one would have supposed that *he* would have been the *last* to accuse his country of literary deficiency, at least to have done so in a tone of *contempt*—and when something *had* been achieved in the field of imagination, and promises of better success held forth, so far from undervaluing past, and discouraging present exertion—an American, we must think, would have been *proud* of fostering the infant energies of native mind. It evinced no little presumption in the learned Editor, to give *publicity* to an opinion, which, we take upon us to assert, runs counter to the feelings and the sentiments, of the greater portion of the people of America; if his persuasion be *really* what he declares it to be, he surely would better have remained *silent* upon the subject; but if on the other hand, his object was to avoid the *trouble* he might have been subjected to, in the frequency of communications under the *poetical* head—nothing could have been more unworthy of a mind as enlightened as his own, than such a miserable subterfuge; but really after refusing to publish *American* Poetry, because there was none that *merited* publication, the Editor should at least have given us better foreign *selections*, than those which he no doubt imagines, *grace* his pages—we do not hesitate to declare, though we have not been very constant readers of

state, and progress of our country; under the superintendence however, of its present Conductor, we may

his paper, that with one or two exceptions, they are even *worse* than any thing of the kind, that has ever been given birth to on this side of the Atlantic, we all our *Beotian drizliness* of brain—and bear but feeble testimony to the literary taste of the Editor, not more creditable to his judgment, than the piece of *Quaker* Poetry, which he was pleased in the fulness of his wisdom and *condescension*, to distinguish by giving it a place in his Gazette—this *was American Poetry*—but as it most truly *merited* the severity of the decision passed American Poetry generally, of course, the Editor published it; it really *was* "*trash*," and therefore answered his *purpose*—an impudent *Parody* upon the style of one of the greatest Poets of the age. Wordsworth may well be heard to repeat the observation of Fox, who upon being questioned by some flippant American, relative to the merits of his celebrated Bill for the regulation of the East Indian affairs, remarked, that he had met often with English impudence, and Scotish impudence, but that *American* impudence stood on the head of *all* impudence. Parody is the mode usually adopted by dullness, to revenge itself upon genius—it is *indeed* "melancholy to see how the sublimest mysteries of the meditative soul, lie at the mercy of *surface-skimming ridicule* and of self-rejoicing ignorance." In avowing his sentiments relative to the utility of Criticism, and the conduct adopted by our American Journalists, it has been suggested to the author, that he has been most unfortunate in the selection of his *time* and *place*, what he *thinks* however, he will *sternly say*—unmoved by censure, and almost indifferent to applause, he has but little to fear—he knows the world too well either to court its smile, or tremble at its frown—and he is prepared to lay but little stress upon the good or bad opinion, it may disposed to entertain of him.

perhaps look for better things—a scholar himself, he should know how to value the interests of Literature; and if he be a genuine American, his mind must be free from those party prejudices and sectional distinctions, that have disgraced the talents with which they have been attended, and over which they were allowed to preside, on the part of those who have preceded him in his present office.

In South Carolina, a still more lamentable state of things has been brought about, by the same spirit for foreign works of genius and criticism, that rages at the north; for united to this spirit, on the part of the few who maintain any pretensions to superior qualifications of mind, there is, at the same time, a general disrelish for all serious literary pursuit, a languor and passiveness evinced upon all subjects connected with mind, the result in part of ignorance, and of monopolising and absorbing commercial and agricultural engagements—that set all attempts at etherealising them into a more intellectual existence, at defiance. It is a modern Beotia seemingly, under the curse of Minerva; the Aristocracy of the state, comprising much talent, are either too sublime to exert it at all, or else, not being allowed to give free vent to their passion for *Great Britain and her literary men*, resolutely observe a contemptuous silence; not at liberty fully to indulge in raptures about every

thing English, they would willingly decry every thing American; and, at the same time that this devotion to foreign works is found to flame so furiously in the breasts of the Federal, the Republican part of the community, the only real friends to American liberty and learning, are not in possession of sufficiently powerful influence to counteract its infernal tendency; they stand, indeed, upon the lasting basis of moral dignity and intellectual superiority, but still they stand *alone*, each in his *individual* sphere; with all the principle, and much of the power necessary to instigate them at an attempt at asserting and maintaining that intellectual supremacy which claims precedence to all other—the moral one of man excepted—but they are still unfortunately too *lukewarm*, and deficient in that noble enthusiasm, requisite to the achievement of every thing great or good. We cannot but notice here, the zealous efforts lately made by a worthy South Carolinian, to bully the Universities of our country, by a pompous citation of grave authorities, into the servile method of *education* pursued in England. "Argument from authority," says a late writer, "is the weakest of all argument;" and this upright Roman, whoever he be, by-the-bye, a noted Professor once upon a time, of that noted seat of learning, the Charleston University, with that never-tiring industry and perseverance, so inseparably the attendants upon

dulness, after floundering through the dust and cobwebs of antiquated folios and quartos, for the last half century, comes forth at last in "mountain labour," and is delivered of—"a mouse:" all that this "learned Theban" has to advance upon the all-important subject of classical education, is unfortunately borrowed from the pages of those great worthies who have preceded him in the task, in which he fancies himself to have been employed in *original* speculations; the merest *echo* of the theories of others; plainly imagining himself the only scholar in America; for he certainly would not have been at the trouble, though no doubt "the pleasure he delights in physics pain," of collecting so many authorities to bear him out, in the little he has himself to say, had he supposed others to have been familiar with the same. Not content however, with simply giving what he is pleased to call *his* "Thoughts," to the public, in a general way, in the fulness of his wisdom and his vanity—Solomon himself was vain—he sits down and indites a most thundering epistle to the Trustees of the South Carolina College, bidding them in the very commencement, after nicely specifying what *he* conceived to be the bare and literal duties of their station—to "go hence, and be no more seen;" talks rapturously of the learned instructions given by Thucydides to his countrymen—"who would have thought the old man had so much *blood* in him?"—of the terrible

vollies that issued from the tongue of Demosthenes—and of the golden numbers that swelled from Homer's harp—raves about these as the unrivalled attractions of the classic page; as *inducements* that should lead us to the study of the Greek, firmly persuaded, no doubt, that he was in the very *depth* of *argument;* now, really, if he designed to instruct American ignorance in the method of acquiring a knowledge of the classics, it was surely a curious mode of going to work, to tell them that these authors were *charming* and all that—a mere begging of the question; the *utility,* and not the *beauty* of the Greek and Latin, is the point that has been variously discussed, from the days of Locke to those of the Professor himself. No one doubts that Homer was a great Poet, Tacitus a brilliant Historian, and Demosthenes an eloquent orator; but it *is* doubted, nay *denied,* that *twenty* years of every man's life should be devoted to the worship of those sages. The chief argument in favour of the cultivation of classical literature is, that an acquaintance with the best models in every species of composition, tends to the acquisition of a just literary taste; and such models are to be found, it has been maintained, only among the ancients: another reason, it is said, why the classics should be attentively studied, and well understood, is derived from the circumstance of a portion of our religion being handed down to us in the

Greek; this latter argument must necessarily lose much of its force as time progresses, and does not exist with the same weight at present, that it did some centuries ago, from obvious causes: it is contended also, that as all modern languages are but dialects of the Greek and Latin, these latter must of course be studied by every people that would understand the construction of its own peculiar speech: the last argument involves the first, as a nice and discriminating taste can be acquired only by him who understands the peculiarities of idiom and genius, of the language in which he writes. In regard to these languages, considered in themselves, as mere mechanical inventions, however harmonious and beautiful they may be—melody of sound, and even those vivid conceptions suggested by the peculiar genius of a language, can never be considered as forming *arguments* for its being studied. Thus then, notwithstanding much stress continues to be placed upon the *euphony* of the Greek and Latin languages, the only plausible pretext for the study of them is, that an acquaintance with them, as the foundations of modern speech, is requisite in some degree to every man, in order that he may understand the language he makes use of. But may we not ask upon this ground, why the Anglo-Norman and Saxon tongues are not made a part of modern education? The elements of every language in Europe, at least of those that are

applied to the purposes of literature, have been derived from these great mother tongues; and yet they are, in the literal sense of the word, dead languages; for they certainly do not exist at present in their original form, although there continue some remaining traces, or rather corruptions, in certain parts of Scotland. The fact is, that a great deal of argument has been needlessly thrown away upon the subject of classical education; it is not necessary for *every* man to be a scholar, no more than a philosopher, chemist or poet—let every country educate one or more scholars—but it would be as absurd to train up every man in the leading-strings of Plato and Aristotle, as to cradle the individuals of a whole nation upon the summits of Parnassus. What would become of the world were this the case? The vicious system, so much complained of in England, of confining the attention almost from infancy up to manhood, in the study of one of the most useless branches of education, this very system is the one which the Professor would introduce into America—we hope his *Volume* will be read in requital for the laborious efforts of its author in compiling it; but if our Universities give it more than *one* reading, it will be because they themselves lie under the same miserable delusion, wrought by a blind respect for authority, and the usages of a pernicious custom. We can only exclaim with a late writer, "of how much good philosophy are

we daily deprived, by the preposterous error of mistaking a knowledge of Prosody for useful learning!" So buried in the dust and rubbish of the musty tomes of old libraries, was this accomplished Grecian when we had the felicity of breathing the same atmosphere with himself, that we really would not have marvelled at any moment to have heard him frame a question of similar sagacity with the one put by a French Antiquary, at Rome, to an American traveller, whether "Quebec was not the capital of the United States!!!" or when the world was filled with amazement at the unrivalled achievements of Napoleon, to have heard this sublime Prosodist doubt whether he could conjugate a Greek verb. We had been gratified to learn that the Professor's letter had been unattended to by the Trustees of the South Carolina college, to whom it was addressed; but our dismay can be better imagined than described, when on turning over the papers of the day, we stumbled upon the following "Reply," from that august body to the noble Grecian—disguising as much of its *gross flattery* as possible, we give it in substance as follows:—"Most Learned Sir, as it is probable that you may soon 'go hence and be no more seen,' we gladly avail ourselves of the earliest opportunity of acknowledging 'the pure *earthly* pleasure that we have extracted from the perusal of thine *immortal* work;' Sir, what though 'Thucydides hath instructed,

Demosthenes thundered, and Homer charmed?' the greatest was behind—it has been reserved for *thee*, to instruct, to thunder, and to charm, as none have heretofore instructed, thundered, or charmed; true, most illustrious Heathen, that Busby* deigned not to doff his beaver to his Imperial Majesty, Charles the second, but *we* sir, even at this distance, are bending in all due reverence to the great supremacy of thy genius. Sir, though the 'word of life,' itself, be not exactly in thy page, yet is 'the wisdom that instructeth' there. We alas, would have discovered, when too late perhaps, that we had 'hewn out unto ourselves systems, broken systems that could hold no truth,' we have indeed been 'seeing through a glass darkly,' and in the valley and shadow of ignorance have we groped, even like 'the wanderer from religion's light,' but praised be the Lord, the sun of Science hath at last shed abroad its influence upon us, even as the sun of righteousness descended upon him. The many luminous ideas Sir, that adorn thy pages, would have been eagerly caught at, and acknowledged by us, had we known them to have emanated from the mind of the most obscure individual, in the most obscure corner, of our obscure country; but Sir, when 'in fear and trembling,' it was revealed to us *who* thou wast—when Sir, 'with looks amazed and eyes

* See the Professor's Letter.

aghast,' we had the 'horrid joy' of learning that thou didst once officiate at the head of those 'illustrious obscures,' who formerly directed the government of that most august seminary of learning, the *Charleston University*—O! Sir, no tongue can tell, the hideous raptures that inflamed our breast; 'Warburton crushed Bolingbroke' Sir, and 'Porson overwhelmed Travis' Sir, but Sir, those were the effects of *pigmies*—and man in fight opposed to man, the victory was nameless—*nameless* Sir, when compared with that which thou hast achieved over us; there Sir, *one* mind but yielded to the superior powers of *another*, but here Sir, a *whole Institution* lies prostrate in confusion, crushed and overwhelmed by the tremendous efforts of thy Titan intellects; the stupendous energies of thy mind Sir, have shaken to its centre the intellectual foundation whereupon we stood. With *such* lights to guide us Sir, be assured we will no longer follow the feeble glimmerings of our own benighted brains; conscious now Sir, that 'the blind' no longer 'lead the blind,' we stand not in fear of 'falling into the ditch of error.' Sir, we have nightly slept with thy page beneath our pillow—worthy is it indeed of some Persian casket.

> "Thy work immortal, is our chief delight,
> All day we read it—dream of it all night."

Sir, we cannot too highly respect the modesty, that will not allow *you* to consider your important production, as a "book of *authority*"—but permit *us* Sir, to tell you, that it is *repleat* with authority, *nothing but authority;* and Sir, it is in breathless expectation, that we await the publication of your "larger volume"—Sir, having dwelt upon the merits of thy *head,* allow us to say something of the virtues of thy *heart*—Sir, we are at a loss which to admire most—we have lately been presented with thy likeness, in full *lengthened Portraiture;* and if we may judge of the beauties of the *moral,* from the visible evidences of the *physical* man, then indeed art thou a "God divine!"—"a combination and a *form indeed!!*"—Sir, believe us, the fame of Professor *Drone,* has been familiar to our ears; may he continue to enjoy those felicities of head and heart, which, we are happy in believing sanctify his home; may the *fascinating smiles of Parisian beauty,* continue to encircle his affections; and may the dust and cobwebs of folios and quartos, continue to shed around him, that "bloom of antique mouldiness," which we have been told, renders him as envied as conspicious; may he still remain possessed of those "heavenly influences," that inspire his exertions; may he succeed in bequeathing to an admiring world, those imperishable monuments attesting his ge-

nius—which, we are in ecstasy to learn, he is daily employed in industriously constructing upon the *pages of others*—"enlightening what in them is dark, and purifying what is impure." But most sagacious Sir, as every virtue hath its foil, and every great man his enemy, so too, art *thou* surrounded by those who would blast the laurels of thy well earned glory, and lessen the splendour of thy resplendant fame; but Sir, ought not *we*, to regard the reports that have reached us, as "slanders of the satirical rogue?" *we*, who *groan* under a debt of obligation, which we grieve to think, can never be repayed by any services on our part, worthy of thee; it hath been represented to us Sir, that thou art in the *daily* practice of certain *littlenesses*, retailing scandal, as it is said, thou retaileth *wit* and *learning*—that to make "some quantity of barren spectators laugh;" thou dost but too often outrage decency in most obscene gabbeling; that thou enjoyest a peculiar felicity in heralding *disastrous* tidings; it hath been said moreover, that thou art wofully bilious and splenetic—that thou art "full to overflowing," of petty jealousies and most splenetic spites—that thou canst "smile and smile, and be a villain;" notwithstanding, that in manners, thou art at one moment, as "rugged as a Russian bear"—and at another, as soothing and complacent as "the sweet South breathing o'er a bank of violets;" that where thou im-

bibest a prejudice—and thy nature, it is said, is full fraught with prejudices, literary, national, and personal—thou leavest "no stone unturned," in order, to "mame and cripple," such luckless wight, as the fates may have ordained to become obnoxious to thy most destructive bile; that thou art moreover, as *voracious* as a canabal, being never unmindful of the *b—ly*, which it is said, hath at last become an enormous tomb of "fish, flesh and fowl." "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" be thou a Spirit of *health*, or goblin damned? be thy intents wicked or charitable? Let us not burst in ignorance; but say, why thy benighted intellects hearsed in oblivion, have burst their cloudy curtains; why the home, in which we knew thee quietly immured, hath opened its dusty jaws to cast thy foul works up; say, why is this, that thou, dread Sir, armed in complete vellum, approachest thus the shadows of our Seminary, making it hideous, and we, *fools of learning*—so terribly to *shake our purposes*, with thoughts beyond the reach of *our* souls? what should this mean?" with this quotation—that seemed to *burst* from the Trustees, rung by the *enthusiasm* of their feelings—closed their reply to the Professor; it is evident from the language of the Reply, that its Author's when writing it, must have laboured under a high degree of excitement—caused, no doubt, by the *wonder* and *admiration* with which they were filled,

at the *unexampled* display of learning and ingenuity contained in the Professor's Epistle—he should feel a little anxious, however, if he be a *good* man, and *not* such as he was represented to the Trustees—for if his little ten-*paged Pamphlet*, could excite such a *fever* of admiration, *what* will be the effects of his "*larger* volume!" the subject merits much reflection.

OBSERVATIONS

UPON

POETRY AND THE DRAMA.

POETRY.

The great writer of the Novum Organum, includes Poetry in his classification of the subjects of human knowledge, and one of the most conspicuous projectors of the French Encyclopedia, embraces under this article the whole range and circle of the Fine Arts. The ingenious Author of the Essay on Miracles, also, upon this subject, holds the following language, "the genius which enables the Poet to move you, by the sublimity and pathos of his verse, should exalt the person who possesses it, above every character of the age in which he lives." Thus we see that Bacon, D'Alembert, and Hume, concur in attaching to Poetry a weight and importance, that

clearly entitles it to one of the loftiest grades in the scale of intellectual supremacy. Of an art thus highly estimated, and universally recognised, in all its abstract claims to encouragement and distinction, it may seem paradoxical to say, that its principles are yet but little understood. We believe that upon this subject, the ideas of mankind are as much at variance as upon the Scripture doctrine of a Trinity in Unity. It has been to no purpose that the ingenious have laboured to illustrate the latter by images drawn from the natural world; but then the terms of this proposition not being clearly understood, it is not surprising perhaps, that the understanding should be cautious, and hesitate as to their real import; but Poetry admits of no such abstract speculations, as have been employed upon that doctrine. Men judge of it according to the impression which it makes upon the imagination or the heart; but this very circumstance again is perhaps productive of little advantage, to the interests of the Muses; for it has been well observed, that "of all those component parts that make up the excellence of a Poet, a few only are subject to general rules, while far more is left to be approved or disapproved of, according as it may happen to suit the fancy or the feelings of the individual."

This being the case, the productions of the Muse, whatever may be their intrinsic merit, are subjected to

the variations, the peculiarities, and the capriciousness of such a diversity of tastes, that the Poet often finds himself vacillating, like our Language, between two extremes or opposing systems; the more he approaches to the one extreme, the greater the praise bestowed—while according to his departure from the other, is proportioned the blame which he receives. True it is, that this process is sometimes *reversed*, in the case of those, who possessing no natural taste or relish for Poetry, affect to judge it, agreeably to certain rules and principles in composition, that no one ever heard of but themselves. "Whoever is acquainted with the mode of proceeding of real genius, will be extremely suspicious of all activity in art, which originates in abstract theory." Thus, then, is Poetry judged of in the main, according to the power which it may possess of affecting the imagination or the heart, those two master chords of the human frame, which, if they be skilfully touched by the inspiration of the Poet, never fail of responding in every bosom, not dead to the impulses of our nature, the subduing melody of the soul that wakes their energies: but the misfortune, as above remarked, of Poetry ever making its appeals to these two sources of emotion, is, their liability to pervertion, either from a naturally bad taste in all that depends for its success, upon a nice perception of beauty, or else from peculiar and long established habits of

mind. It is not in Poetry as in Painting, where the great excellence is found to consist in an observance of certain rules. Sir Joshua Reynolds himself has remarked, that a taste for the beauties of the latter, is altogether *acquired*, which implies that before we can be qualified to judge of its merits, we must be first acquainted with those laws in conformity to which, the Painter is known to found his claims to our admiration.—Painting moreover, is purely an imitative art, employed in exhibiting exterior and visible forms, while Poetry, from being altogether intellectual, is freed from any dependance upon external appearances, making its appeal rather to the mind than to the senses. It has been said, indeed, that even in Poetry—the assertion has not been qualified as applying to certain compositions, a perception of whose merit must often depend, upon an acquaintance with those rules of art, that direct how to avoid error, rather than to supply original matter—for it is in these departments of literary exertion, where perfection is found to consist, as Madame De Stael remarks, rather in "the absence of defects, than in the existence of great beauties"—it has been said that a relish and a taste, for the nicer and minuter excellences, even of poetry, is the result of a long experience, and the fruit of study and observation—but we cannot think this altogether cor-

rect—Poetry is the language of passion, and of a warm and luxuriant imagination; its appeals are made to the universal and eternal sources of emotion in our being; as sublimity has been nobly said by Longinus, to be "an image reflected from the inward greatness of the soul," —so, may it be said of Poetry, it is an image reflected from the inward greatness and *beauty* of the soul—all genuine Poetry therefore, must be felt rather than reasoned upon. True sublimity, which is one of its qualities, is immediately acknowledged, from the great images it presents to the mind—no one ever paused in the midst of a powerful and impassioned description, to reflect and reason with himself, and ask whether he ought or ought not to be moved. Montgomery must have felt his soul subdued and overpowered, by the irresistible eloquence and pathos of the Elegy in a Country Church Yard, when, upon the heights of Quebec, just previous to an anticipated engagement, surrounded by all the "pomp and circumstance of war"—when "glory like the dazzling Eagle stood, perched on his banner"—he was yet heard to say, in the midst of all this—that he would happily have exchanged the renown that must have attended his victory on the morrow, for the fame of having produced that divine Poem—the fact of *his* having expressed this sentiment—a soldier, whose life had been blazed out in camps—who had been accustomed to

hear no other than the "stormy music" of the drum—is strong testimony in favour of the position that Poetry speaks an universal language—alike intelligent to the Courtier and the Peasant; though perhaps this universality of feeling and design, is found to diffuse itself more in the Drama, than any other species of writing—yet it ever attends all the truer and more permanent productions of the Muse—for this reason it is, that the impressions made by Tragedy are of a more general and lasting influence, than those excited by the efforts of the Comic Muse.

* Various definitions as to the nature of those several productions, to which we affix the term poetry, have

* The definition of Poetry contained in the text, coincides we think exactly with the one given by Lord Bacon—that "it is an accommodation of the shows of things to the desires of the mind;" alluding strictly and exclusively to *fiction;* but Mr. Campbell in his late Lectures upon Poetry, thinks proper to extend the above definition, as applying to *all* Poetry—asserting that fiction, in one acceptation, is by no means necessary to Poetry—namely, when understood to mean a "feigning of events and characters;" now to our humble apprehension there can be *no other* meaning attached to the term, and if there *be* no other, then Mr. Campbell's opinion is altogether at variance with that of Lord Bacon. According to the latter, fiction is Poetry—mere *fanciful associations,* says Mr. Campbell, do not constitute fiction, and *these* alone being found to exist in the works alluded to in the text, of course they are not fictions, consequently not Poems, and this is all we contend for: we

been given by different theorists upon the subject; the truest perhaps is that which declares it to be the "language of the passions"—this we think no one will dis-

certainly admit that fanciful associations do not *alone* constitute Poetry, but at the same time there are few fictions if any, in which these are not to be found. Mr. Campbell thinks that Lord Bacon's definition, as applying alone to *imaginary* history, too limited and indeterminate, and mentions the Ode, which Lord Bacon excludes, as properly coming within the scope of the definition; but Sappho's Love Ode, which Mr. Campbell says, gives you the "*realities* of nature;" and yet "accommodates the shows of things to the desires of the mind," is still in some measure of imaginary beauty—*heightened* to that degree which is consistent with *probability*, and *such* is the beauty of all fiction—so that Lord Bacon is correct, at least in applying his definition to imaginary history or fiction, under which head the Ode, certainly the *higher* Ode, is we think included; thus then we are of opinion, that the beauties of passion and imagination, heightened to that degree which is consistent with probability, should properly be considered as constituting Poetry in the strictest sense of the term—and beauties so heightened, amount to a degree of *fiction*, but fiction limited by probability; but it may be asked has probability been made the standard of invention in the Orlando or the Tempest? to this we answer, that the mind makes allowance for the *peculiar agency* employed in those Poems, and this allowance once made, there is a consistency of keeping throughout, that carries with it a sufficient air of probability mingling with the fiction. When Lord Bacon says, that Poetry is fiction, he only says in other words that fiction presents to the mind all those assemblages of images, and those delightful associations that constitute the very essence of Poetry: these heightened at the same time, and the feelings they give rise to, sustained with

pute, when it is considered, how many opposite species of writings, have been classed under this head; wherein for the most part, the imagination alone has been employed—that is, where fanciful images by way of illustration, have been introduced. The Telemachus of Fenelon, the Romance of Cervantes and others, are usually termed Poems. The Sermons of Taylor, are said to be replete with fine poetical imagery, the writings of Addison, also are highly imaginative—and the metaphysicians of the Elizabethan age, are said to have looked upon man and nature, not merely through the "spectacles of books"—but with the "frenzy of a Poet's eye." It has been said indeed, that every man of fine genius, is naturally more or less a Poet, in as much as he is imbued with a feeling for the sublime and beautiful; but this is surely a very false doctrine—to attach the name of Poet to every writer of great powers, would be grossly to misapply the term; no author of antiquity, and certainly none among the moderns, ever possessed a nicer or a deeper sense of the beauties of Nature and of Art, as evinced in his writings, than Longinus; his Critique

a corresponding dignity and elevation by the passion of the Poet, and it is in consequence of the *absence* of this fire and continued elevation, in the works alluded to in the text, that they are denied any claims to poetical inspiration—after all perhaps, Poetry is a mystery—like Religion, rather to be *felt* than *reasoned* upon.

upon the Homeric Poems, is full of lofty and fanciful illustration; but no one at the same time we apprehend, can be so far misguided in his notions upon the subject, as to pronounce him a Poet, in the strictest acceptation of the term. Addison, who though a man of genius, was certainly no Poet, has nevertheless some images in themselves, highly poetical and grand; but then how cold and formal do they appear, when clothed in the stately garb of his unimpassioned Muse! witness for instance, his comparison in the Campaign of a general marching to battle, to an angel—"riding the whirlwind and directing the storm;" the image here, is in itself one of great strength and sublimity, worthy of a mind of fine powers, but how inadequately conveyed! the writer was capable of conceiving, but not of expressing, such an idea. In the hands of Homer or of Shakspeare—the reader would have been made to *feel*, as well as perceive the loftiness of the thought; the image, moreover, *stands alone*—not preceded or followed by any others of a corresponding force and beauty—like a diamond in a crown of thorns—it was a happy thought, elicited in a happy moment—not the rich burst of inspiration, always swelling at the soul, and darting upwards its "pyramids of fire"—meteors of the minds, starry world—Longinus, when he likens the Iliad to the midday, and the Odyssey to the setting sun, the former to the ocean at its full, the

latter at its ebb, presents you with images of greatness unrivalled—notwithstanding which, Longinus was no Poet. It* has been said, that the delight which Poetry bestows, partakes strongly of pain, and that "the compositions which attract us the most powerfully, are those

* A few days previous to these Observations being put to press, the Author, anxious to learn what a writer of such merited celebrity had to say upon this subject—turned to Mr. Campbell's first Lecture upon Poetry, republished in the Literary Gazette; and was not a little disappointed to find him, instead of offering some theory of his own—contenting himself with barely mentioning the strange position, which has been maintained by some writers upon its debateable ground, but which has been so completely overthrown by Knight in his Essays upon Taste—namely, that an *extreme* degree of privation constituted a source of sublimity: in answer to the question, how is it that the mind derives pleasure from painful representations, it has been said that there is a portion of sublime feeling connected with *high* excitement—no doubt, but surely not with *every* species and degree of emotion, because were this the case, fear and jealousy, thirst and hunger, would each become a source of sublimity; but no man about to be precipitated from a precipice, tortured upon the rack of horrible suspicion, or perishing of famine, was ever conscious of sublime emotion. Without being blinded by partiality for self, we cannot but think therefore, that the explanation of this moral phenomenon contained in the text, the most consonant to reason and experience. Mr. Campbell was not acquainted however, as he tells us himself, with Knight's Essays when writing his Lecture; and as he appears to admire the Essayist, he will no doubt bring himself to agree with him upon this point. However it may savour of presumption, the Author must confess, that he felt a strong disposition to examine one

which produce in us, most of the effects of actual suffering and wretchedness;" this may sound somewhat paradoxical, but has been thus accounted for: the gratification which

or two other of Mr. Campbell's arguments, which appeared to him very inconclusive and indeed almost incorrect. Schlegel's specious doctrine for instance, that in the literary as the natural world, there is a period of bloom and maturity, after which follows *decay*—has been taken up by Mr. Campbell: he merely echoes the opinion, however, without attempting its support by any reasoning of his own—there is a remarkable incident in the history of Spanish Poetry, of its sudden rise from almost unexampled corruption, to the utmost perfection—occasioned by the exertions of a *single* genius, Calderon, who found it in that state of extreme carelessness and vitiation, into which it had been plunged by the false taste of his predecessor Lope de Vega: this fact would serve to correct the theories, upon which the doctrine of a *regular* progress and decline in art is supported. The question, also, whether in the advancement of the human mind from barbarism to refinement, Poetry be not found to constitute an *intermediate* stage, is really examined by Mr. Campbell, with a seriousness which would seem to imply, that the object of the Poet was the *same* with that of the Philosopher—namely, human improvement, and this alone; that while the latter is busy in tracing the *fact* of the abberrations of the fixed stars, the former should employ his pen in describing to us their exact *aspect*, were it possible to ascertain it—that philosophy has some little influence upon Poetry, it is true, but it can no more destroy or even weaken its powers, than those of the mind itself; when it overthrows the *latter*, the former will no doubt fall with it, but not *till then*—upon the whole, the second part of Mr. Campbell's Lecture is characterised rather by felicity of diction, of which he certainly is a master, than by newness or depth of thought.

we derive from representations of life and character, as surrounded by circumstances, and assailed by events the most afflicting, results not from any sense of pleasure which we experience from such representations in *themselves*, but is accounted for in the circumstance of those representations, awakening feelings and reflections more powerful and overwhelming, than any other that can possibly affect us: the stronger the impression made, the more permanent it becomes—and it has been truly said, that there is always a call for such appeals to our sympathies: it is these chiefly that sustain existence, and render us sensibly alive to it—there is a natural propensity in our natures, to awaken and indulge in strong sensation; there is perhaps an appetite for intense feeling, more general than persons are willing to allow; if we except cases where the heart has become "brazed by custom," there is a feeling of false shame, which many labour under when they have found themselves weeping without any apparent cause; their tears they term a weakness, and end perhaps in vaunting their inaccessibility to any softer visitings of nature; while unmeaning mirth, which is often but another name for insensibility, becomes the presiding genius of their lives; but the wise, it has been said, have a far deeper sense, and "so near grows life to death," *they* know and feel full well that man has greater reason for his tears than

his smiles. But putting aside these general reflections, it will be found, upon analyzing the sources of all emotion, that there is a character in suffering, if we may be allowed the expression, which absorbs the mental energies to an intensity that rewards itself; that is, in such representations of suffering, as while they do not oppress us with a deadening reality, afford a wholesome and a soothing melancholy exercise to the powers of our moral being—"all suffering doth destroy, or is destroyed, even by the sufferer;" downright agony like darkness, is negative; there is nothing sufficiently definite in it, to afford the mind that repose which carries with it a temporary calm; while those exhibitions and the sensations arising from them, of pain, that are tempered by certain alleviating circumstances, are highly favourable to that noble moral enthusiasm, which marks and elevates our being; they resemble that dubious twilight, which is one of the most powerful sources of the sublime; who that ever studied the two faces in that divine production of Romney, representing Shakspeare nursed by Tragedy and Comedy, but has felt and owned the depth and fullness, the truth and energy of expression portrayed in the countenance of the *Tragic* Muse, which told that her devotions were not of this world, and that her aspiration were fixed upon the immensity and sublimity of Heaven? Poetry then is made up of

we derive from representations of life and character, as surrounded by circumstances, and assailed by events the most afflicting, results not from any sense of pleasure which we experience from such representations in *themselves*, but is accounted for in the circumstance of those representations, awakening feelings and reflections more powerful and overwhelming, than any other that can possibly affect us: the stronger the impression made, the more permanent it becomes—and it has been truly said, that there is always a call for such appeals to our sympathies: it is these chiefly that sustain existence, and render us sensibly alive to it—there is a natural propensity in our natures, to awaken and indulge in strong sensation; there is perhaps an appetite for intense feeling, more general than persons are willing to allow; if we except cases where the heart has become "brazed by custom," there is a feeling of false shame, which many labour under when they have found themselves weeping without any apparent cause; their tears they term a weakness, and end perhaps in vaunting their inaccessibility to any softer visitings of nature; while unmeaning mirth, which is often but another name for insensibility, becomes the presiding genius of their lives; but the wise, it has been said, have a far deeper sense, and "so near grows life to death," *they* know and feel full well that man has greater reason for his tears than

his smiles. But putting aside these general reflections, it will be found, upon analyzing the sources of all emotion, that there is a character in suffering, if we may be allowed the expression, which absorbs the mental energies to an intensity that rewards itself; that is, in such representations of suffering, as while they do not oppress us with a deadening reality, afford a wholesome and a soothing melancholy exercise to the powers of our moral being—"all suffering doth destroy, or is destroyed, even by the sufferer;" downright agony like darkness, is negative; there is nothing sufficiently definite in it, to afford the mind that repose which carries with it a temporary calm; while those exhibitions and the sensations arising from them, of pain, that are tempered by certain alleviating circumstances, are highly favourable to that noble moral enthusiasm, which marks and elevates our being; they resemble that dubious twilight, which is one of the most powerful sources of the sublime; who that ever studied the two faces in that divine production of Romney, representing Shakspeare nursed by Tragedy and Comedy, but has felt and owned the depth and fullness, the truth and energy of expression portrayed in the countenance of the *Tragic* Muse, which told that her devotions were not of this world, and that her aspiration were fixed upon the immensity and sublimity of Heaven? Poetry then is made up of

upon the subject of Poetry, and implies a doubt of the correctness of the position, that the works which delight us the most, are the fullest of painful representations, it will not be going altogether out of our way, perhaps, to examine. "Shall we never have done with *begging* the question against enjoyment, and denying or doubting the possibility of the only end of virtue itself, with a dreary *wilfulness* that prevents our obtaining it?" This is asked, in all the self-complacency and inveterate spirit, of an exclusive system of morals and of mind. The systems of the few, are ever selfish and confined. Those ideas alone attain to an universal assent, which are founded upon the broad and immutable basis of a genuine and enlightened philosophy; and upon a clear and deep insight into the elementary principles of our nature. The Moralist should speculate upon human character as the Poet describes it, in the abstract; that is, removed and freed in some measure, from those vile and artificial forms, and those restrictive maxims of human policy, which tend to force upon man an appearance of character, as shallow and sophistical as themselves; and which united to the moulding events of time, throw a shade upon the virtues, and a damp upon the sympathies of the noblest nature, imbuing the heart with bitter waters, and imparting to the mind a spirit of cheerless prospective, by which perhaps, it is lead to make a somewhat false estimate of life.

To the above pompous question, it may be said, in reply, that no man is unhappy through *choice*, and although the end of virtue be to make us happy, yet it does not follow, that they who are unhappy, should be without virtue. This, however, seems clearly to be the doctrine of Mr. Hunt. He is evidently under the influence of two systems—his poetical and moral creeds; all human systems are founded upon peculiar and individual ideas, and the accidents of time; we should be cautious, therefore, how we lend our assent to such; for however mild and enlightened they may sometimes be in themselves, they are yet liable to great abuse, from the monopolizing vanity of those who take upon them to pronounce all in error, who happen to oppose their prejudices. No man, unless he be a madman or a natural, could be found with hardihood enough to deny—that there was virtue in the world, because he himself was without it; nor doth the man, who is unhappy, doubt that there may be much enjoyment in life, though he himself has been denied it. The greatest Poet since the days of Milton, and one of the greatest that have ever appeared in any age or nation, whose wrongs have been as conspicuous and as mighty as his genius, after suffering all that human malice could inflict, tells you, notwithstanding, that he believes "two, or one, to be almost what they seem, that goodness is no name, and happiness

no dream." Yet Mr. Hunt seems to think, that one of the strongest arguments in support of his doctrine, that every man might be happy who *set about being* so, is derived from the circumstance, that they who appear to be otherwise, never fail to assert that there is no such thing as pleasure to be found, and are miserable, not only in consequence of believing that misery was destined for them, but because they wilfully persist in the conclusion of there being no happiness upon earth. Now few things can be more lamentable than arguments like these, or more clearly evince that where it wishes to establish a favourite doctrine, or oppose one it does not like, the mind scruples not to employ reasonings, at which, if the result of ignorance, idiocy itself would blush: and if of deliberate purpose, we shudder to discover in the very preachers about morals and good order, neither morality nor common justice.

When the great Father of ancient philosophy declared, (we cannot agree with those who imagine, that he meant by this confession, to throw an air of ridicule upon the vain speculations of the Sophists, but rather that his real object was to convey a moral lesson, in reminding us of the short-sightedness and imperfection of all human knowledge,) when Socrates avered, that all we know is, that nothing can be known, he did not design thereby to say, that because we do not know *every thing*,

we know nothing; his words were intended merely as a comment, upon the fleeting instability of all sublunary things, and the finite powers of the human intellect. As well then might Mr. Hunt carp at this doctrine, and say that Socrates' philosophy was of a billious and morbid nature, as pronounce those "blasphemers of nature's goodness," who, when they mean to express the mixed character of human enjoyment, arising from the feeling, that "the ways of God are" not *always* "justified to man," allow themselves, perhaps, too great a latitude of sweeping expression, and tell you that there is little, if any thing, worth living for; their "blasphemy" amounts to this. "All our knowledge," says Stillingfleet, the learned author of the Origines Sacræ, "consists merely in the gathering up of some scattered fragments, of what was once an entire fabric;" well, the Poet upon the subject of human happiness, says no more than this, that all our enjoyment in this probationary state, consists in the melancholy task of gathering together, and cherishing as well as we can, those scattered and almost withered blossoms of hope and promise, whose germs had once a deep and ample flourish, before sin had entered the garden. Thus according to Mr. Hunt's notions, these two great men, both conspicuous for their piety, were likewise "involuntary blasphemers of nature's goodness." But again, the mind when under the

influence of any strong emotion, very naturally expresses itself in language corresponding to its feelings; thus when Hamlet declares the world to be "an unweeded garden, that grows to seed," his passion is evidently roused to the last degree; and he gives vent to it very naturally in such a reflection; notwithstanding which, all that he means to say is, that the world is generally depraved. Thus we think Mr. Hunt's arguments fall to the ground through their own weakness. He is perhaps a very *moral* man, like many others of his profession, and therefore may not like such bitter overflowings of the Spirit; he should remember, however, that very good men will sometimes swear. The fact is, Mr. Hunt's notions as to the nature and the end of Poetry, are of a piece with those he has already broached upon the subject of versification, equally false and puerile; unfitted for any lofty flights in the former, he strenuously recommends mere simplicity and familiarity in its creations; equally incapable of imparting the least strength or dignity to the latter, he is for ever more canting about the bad taste of the French school; its cold and artificial refinements; and in affecting to admire and imitate the chaster beauties of the old English style, he falls into the opposite extreme of the most disgusting freedom and vulgarity; and has unfortunately adopted all the errors, without perceiving or possessing any of the merits of

the writers of the Elizabethan age. Mr. Hunt is moreover an epicurean in morals, and he tells you himself that his "Poetical tendencies very luckily fall in with his moral theories;" his Poetry accordingly is of a cheerful and lively cast: but in the exclusiveness of a mind very far from possessing first rate powers, and certainly not imbued with a spirit of true Poetry, he is for condemning every thing in morals and in mind, that will not bear, according to the false standard of excellence in both, which he has arrogantly proposed to himself. The fact is, we no longer recognise as immutable, the peculiar notions upon which have been founded, those absurd maxims in morals and in literature, which have resolved themselves into what it has been fashionable among Pedants, to term standards in those several departments of human pursuit.

Voltaire, speaking of the little attention paid by the moderns to the unities of the Drama, remarks, that it is as essential in constructing a good Play, that the writer should observe these frigid regulations, as that the architect in building should understand, in order to apply the rules of his art; now, surely few things can be more absurd than such an illustration; you might as well deprive the builder of his tools, as of the means, which consist in the knowledge, of using them. Shakspeare needed no mechanical guides, and employed none

in the construction of his Dramas: yet was he fertile in the means whereby they were formed. The one is purely intellectual, the other a matter of precept and of practice. But Voltaire, like Leigh Hunt, was overawed by the authority of what are called standard works; from whose decision upon these points they would fain persuade you, there is no appeal.

To return to the moral philosophy, we cannot say philosophical morals of Leigh Hunt, we would examine a little further, as they lie in our way, his opinions affecting that species of poetry, which seems to be the result rather of a certain constitutional temperament, than of any defect in mental or moral organization, as he seems to think. We do this the more willingly, as it may afford us an opportunity of evincing the falacy of those sentiments that tend to reflect upon the mind, and consequently the theological tenets (for these are regarded now a-days as of close affinity,) of some of the greatest geniuses, that have adorned the literary annals of any age or country. Mr. Hunt is the poet of social and of rural life; and although he affects to condemn the bad taste of the Continental School, *he* is himself as deeply tinctured with its prejudices, and fettered by its cold and formal perceptions, as though he had been brought a professed disciple of its principles. He sits down to write moreover, evidently under the influence of a

self-suggested and most idolized system, the end of which is, to introduce, or as he says, revive a relish for the more simple beauties of Poetry; rural life and occupations, dancing and music, the more lively and fanciful portions of Greek fable, and the happier and brighter creeds of Christian faith; these tending to diffuse a spirit of cheerfulness, charity, justice and good fellowship among men, which is clearly desirable, and which he thinks it has been the aim of every *great* Poet to effect. Of course among these Mr. Hunt numbers himself. Thus he sets out, and has the vanity to tell you so withal, with the view not of writing *Poetry,* but of framing rules and maxims of *morality;* and the verses comprised in his volumes, are intended as specimens or illustrations of what he advances upon this doctrinal point.

Now all this may seem very specious, but as knaves and hypocrites cant most of that they never practice, this is a mere show and pretence of writing; a gaudy drapery to hide deformity; a mere bustle to prevent his imbecility from being suspected. But his design ends not here, of recommending in Poetry a certain tone of feeling and of thought, like all inferior minds wedded to system, adopting prejudices to hide weaknesses, perceiving no beauty in any thing that does not tally with his own individual notions of the great or beautiful, he is at open war with those who either in their writings or

their lives, give proof of upholding different sentiments and theories from his own. The Sophist and the Epicurean, however formally at variance, are now a-days, we are inclined to think, very much allied, and perfectly concur in their notions as to the nature and the sources of moral virtue. Mr. Hunt has as much, perhaps more of the enthusiast in his composition, than any of those writers whom he presumes to arraign, for what he sagely conceives to be their errors of head and heart; and when he preaches about the "involuntary blasphemers of nature's goodness," if he designs any allusion to the *Cloistered Votarist*, who bends before his crucifix or rosary, in hope of appeasing or averting the wrath he deprecates, or the *glorious martyr* who perishes in defence of his faith, he himself, we must think, is the "blasphemer" he denounces: if on the other hand, he meant to convey any censure or reflection upon the writings of those great men, who because they look somewhat deeper into things have a more sorrowful sense than his own, he is like the dog barking at the moon, because he cannot *reach* it.

OBSERVATIONS

UPON

POETRY AND THE DRAMA.

THE DRAMA.

THERE are three questions connected with the Drama, which we propose briefly to examine;—first, whether it be essential to the construction of a good play, that its ground work be historical;—second, whether Tragedy, or the more serious Drama will admit of the introduction of descriptions of external nature;—and last, whether some degree of obscurity be not only admissable, but whether it doth not tend to heighten those impressions which it is the business of the Poet to create:—with regard to the first of these questions, which has been variously agitated, it is, perhaps, sufficient to observe that some of the most interesting and powerfully written Dramas in any language, are built upon subjects purely fictitious;—the Robbers of Schiller, the Orphan of Otway, and the Douglass of Home, and many it is said

even of Voltaire's Tragedies, are all formed upon such basis as the imagination supplies. It is moreover the opinion of Dr. Blair, the correctness of whose judgment in these matters is not to be impugned, that it is of very little moment whether the Dramatist draw his materials from the pages of the Historian, or from sources supplied by his own invention; but without appealing to the authority of judges, whose opinion alone, perhaps, would be sufficient to settle all dispute—or referring to examples that might bear us out upon the point—we will examine the question for ourselves. It will appear, we think, to every unbiassed mind, upon a moment's reflection, that inasmuch as we go to a theatre rather for the purpose of moral than of intellectual gratification, rather with the view of witnessing great physical exertion on the part of those who present themselves in any trying and interesting scene, and of having our sympathies elicited by such scene, it is of little import whether that exertion be displayed in portraying the sufferings of a real or imaginary personage, provided the exertion itself be powerful; or whether the scene in which it exhibit itself be one of historical fidelity or fictitious semblance, if that scene be strongly conceived and ably delineated; the display of great power in any shape, or of any description, tends to expand and elevate the mind, and thus becomes a source of the sublime, in feeling and in

thought, which is ever attended with the highest gratification of which our intellectual being is susceptible: let the writer be gifted with strong mental energies—let the tragic performer, who may be said to embody those energies, be possessed of such qualifications of mind and body as will enable him to sustain and display them with a corresponding vigour, and we will answer for the impression which such power is calculated to produce, be it employed upon what theme, or in what manner soever. We are told that some of the greatest Venetian painters are known to have displayed the powers of their genius in the most unattractive, and indeed almost disgusting representations, in which there was little to be found of what is termed imitation or colouring of nature, nothing to attract the senses: but then say judges upon the subject, there is such an exhibition of skill and fidelity of execution, as to impress the mind with the most overwhelming conceptions of undefined power, and thus to raise and stimulate the imagination with images of the sublime; and as the ideas derived from such exhibitions of skill and power, are associated with and transferred to, the subjects themselves in which this skill and power are made manifest, these subjects become to be invested with all that energy and interest which render them so precious in the judgment and gratifying to the taste, of those capable of discerning

and relishing true excellence: thus then, let the subjects of the Tragic Muse be ever so unpromising in themselves—whether they be founded upon fact, or upon such notions of probability as may impart to them an air at least of verisimilitude, it is matter of little or no concern, provided the Poet be possessed of strong and original genius; in which case, he cannot fail in attaining the end he proposes to himself—which is, by irresistible eloquence, and powerful appeals to the passions, to melt us at one moment into tears, and at another, to expand and elevate the mind, by awakening sentiments of the noblest enthusiasm, and of generous admiration: where this is brought about, the exertions of the Poet have been rewarded, inasmuch as they have proved successful, for success is the hope that inspires his pen: there is another point of view in which we will consider this question, of equal consequence with the former, if indeed it merit at all that degree of importance that has been attached to it;—those who are in favour of the system of affording to all Tragedy an historical basis, tell you very pompously, that where the Poet makes choice of a proper subject, that is, one in its nature Dramatic, the very circumstance of its being collected from authentic records, imparts to it a weight and dignity of character highly adapted to the purposes of the writer, calculated to assist and elevate his developments of

character and design, and affording him an opportunity of throwing around his creations a fictitious but brilliant and imposing appearance, of all that is grand and solemn in science, pomp and parade—it requires very little sagacity to detect the real meaning and object of those who hold forth this kind of language, their arguments may appear plausible at first, but upon a moment's reflection, you discover in them a design and tendency to uphold and establish certain rules and maxims, which it requires very little force of reasoning to controvert—which we cannot but think have been long since exploded in the Drama; and which indeed could never have applied with much weight, inasmuch as we do not conceive them to be founded in nature—"there is no monopoly of poetry," says Schlegel, "for certain ages and nations, and consequently, that despotism in taste by which it is attempted to make those rules universal, which were at first perhaps arbitrarily established, is a pretence which ought not to be allowed;" and to what do these rules refer? to the absurd practice of confining the range and scope of the Poet's imagination, within certain given limits of time and place—those hypercritics in taste, who are for ever more insisting upon the propriety, and inculcating the necessity of making history the basis of Tragedy, know well enough, that in that case the Poet is under an obligation to adhere to

the unities of the Drama, and to fetter the flights of his muse with these leaden canons of the schools, is the object, in the attainment of which they labour; but as the zealous bigot in religion, in order to promote the views, and disseminate the doctrines of an exclusive faith—cants most about the terrors of another world, as threatening and impending over those who reject his peculiar notions and principles—so, these denouncing critics, with the view of establishing a system of their own, and of forcing upon the writer an observance of their narrow laws, assume a tone of high dictation, and tell you, unless your subject be historical, the displeasure and the frown of those most qualified to judge, will most assuredly prove the reward of your labours—the fact is, there can be but one opinion upon the subject of these unities; those of time and place may be almost altogether dispensed with, while that of action perhaps it may be well to observe: indeed few writers ever feel disposed to violate the unity of their design, where their object is, as it ever should be, to make a deep and lasting impression; though even with regard to this unity, you may discriminate between the individuality and identity of the leading and forming idea, and the various actions and incidents that it may give rise to—the agent must be one, but its operations may be manifold. In the Grecian theatre, we are told the unities of time and place,

and necessarily of action, were a matter of absolute necessity; the very constitution of their Drama rendered an attention to them necessary, being a continued representation, without pause, the time and place of an action therefore could not possibly have been varied—the rules that regulated the formation of their Drama, cannot then be made to apply to our own. Why is it, that in the modern Drama, the Prologue is made subservient to the author's plan of expressing his fears and anxieties, and of addressing the audience in "propria personæ," before whom he is sensible he stands on trial—we ask why is the Prologue made to answer a purpose of this kind among us, when on the Grecian stage, it was expressly intended to unfold the preliminary circumstances leading to the grand event of any piece? have we followed the Greeks in this particular? No; why then are we to be fettered by any rules or practices relating to composition of any kind, which they were compelled to observe, because they usually originated either in necessity, or the peculiarity of the national taste. A most lamentable instance is recorded of the incongruities resulting from a strict adherence to these rules upon the Grecian stage, in the Electra of Sophocles, which is regarded as one of the best and most correct pieces of which the Greeks could boast—a conspiracy is actually carried on before the very door of the person against

whom it is set on foot—such an absurdity would not be tolerated at the present day—it was as gross a violation of probability, nay, even grosser than any thing of the same kind that Shakspeare himself ever was guilty of, with all his disregard of these common laws of the Drama; but it has been said, that a strict observance of these rules was not a practice peculiar to the Greeks, but one founded in nature; were this altogether the case, should we not *reject* those pieces in which this *natural law* was neglected? Whereas, on the contrary, some of the most masterly productions of Dramatic genius are found deficient in an attention to these regulations—that is, productions the most powerfully *interesting* and *passionate;* and it is in *such* pieces that we are less, if at all, sensible of these improbabilities of change of time and place—and *these* are the pieces that *properly* belong to the stage; so that as to the effect being *lessened* in consequence of *perceiving* the *deception,* which results from *too* gross violation of those rules that tend to keep it alive—they are mistaken who uphold the other opinion, because, we say, that in pieces full of *interest* and *passion,* and *such alone* are *Dramatic,* we are never allowed a "breathing time," for these *niceties* of cold *criticism,* inasmuch therefore as this is *true,* those arguments in favour of the unities, built upon the supposition that their violation is *immediately detected,* and

consequently that the *spell* is broken in the *delusion* being lost, must necessarily fall through—for we are never permitted to feel this violation in such tragedies as *Othello, Macbeth,* or even *Hamlet;* and as long as we are *insensible* to it, so long it does not exist. We certainly think it well that all such *Dramatic* authors as Addison, should pay a strict regard to these *impositions,* for the *regularity* they introduce, is the *sole* merit they can lay claim to—and where we have not the *beauties* of the mind, we expect to find at least the formalities of the judgment. We had imagined that Dr. Johnson's reasonings upon this point, had forever silenced the clamors of the advocates of observances of the ancient theatre, but it seems that the weak cavilings of *Voltaire,* are regarded as having destroyed the manly arguments of the great Lexicographer. With regard to the French writers who lay themselves under the direction of these rules, we well know that among them it is a *system* of *rigid imitation,* together with their *own imbicility,* thus then we think it appears, that Tragedy built upon an historical basis, is necessarily subject to the control of these unities; and that they should maintain their authority, is the object held in view by those who would have the Drama so constructed—in order say they, that it should arrive at a *classical* purity and correctness—this word *classical* however, is grossly *misapplied,* when

made to denote or express mere *uniformity* and *systematic* arrangement in any composition; the term originated among the Greeks, from the circumstance of the people having been divided into tribes or *classes*—those constituting the *first* class, were called *classici*, hence all works of the *highest* merit, were said to be *classical;* the word was never meant to express mere *regularity* in composition, but had a far more liberal and extended application—but modern *dulness* has *perverted* the original meaning to suit its own purposes—extreme regularity, the "sublime of fools," is now regarded as constituting the chief, if not the *sole* merit of any work, and is allowed to appropriate *exclusively* to itself, the distinction implied in this word of *high sound*, which has been held up like a "death's-head," to awe and intimidate, what it has been common among literary "mooncalfs," to term the *arrogance* and impetuosity of genius. With* regard to the second question relating to the Drama—whether Tragedy will admit of the introduc-

* We are pleased to find our opinion upon this subject in coincidence with that of Sir Walter Scott, who, in some late remarks upon Novel writing and the Drama, in which he distinguishes the former department from the latter, has the following words, "Description and Narration, which form the very essence of the *Novel*, must be very sparingly introduced into *Dramatic* composition, and scarce ever have a good effect upon the stage." We must be allowed to differ with the

tion of descriptions of *external* nature, it may be remarked, that like the *choral* songs of the Grecians, they may be very *fine*, but cold and *unnatural;* and as it has

writer however, when he tells us that the Novelist, in attempting the Drama, fails not so much from a want of *Dramatic talent*, as from a deficiency of *skill* in inventing and conducting the common *mechanism* of the stage—not so much from a want of *power*, as of certain *habits of mind*—these two provinces of literature are more widely opposed however, than it is generally supposed, and require, each, peculiar powers of mind; that is, powers balanced in peculiar relationship—imagination is required of the *Geometer* as well as of the Poet, and yet its process in the mind of the former, is very different from what it is in that of the latter; the faculties of imaginative perception, abstraction, combination and association, belong alike to the Poet and the Painter; and yet the process of each of these powers in the mind of the one, is contrary to what it is in that of the other; and this amounts almost to *distinct* powers themselves—the Dramatist may certainly become a good Novelist, as in the instance of Maturin; while the professed Novelist has seldom perhaps succeeded in the Drama—the failures of Fielding and others, bear testimony to the fact; this may perhaps be thus accounted for, the former is supposed to possess *all* the powers of the *Poet;* and the Romance, or higher Novel lies in the region of poetry; whereas, to the latter, many of these powers are denied, or at least not given in equal ratio, and differently tempered *a priori*—the Dramatic writer in essaying the Novel, has only to call in all the various powers of his mind; but the Novelist, in attempting the Drama, finds it necessary to exert energies to which his mind has been a stranger—he has been habituated to indulge in theory and amplification, he finds it requisite to analyse and compress; he has been accustomed to wander in

been suggested, that had the *dialogue* been *first* introduced upon the Greek theatre, the *chorus* probably would never have been invented; in like manner we think, that

the region of imagination, he is called down from his high flights to adjust the differences and lead the disordered powers of the heart; it is not the *sensible* medium through which the Dramatist conveys his conceptions, that interferes with the mental habits of the Novelist, for he could easily render himself familiar with this, but the faculties of his mind are required to exert themselves with a higher degree of vigour, more intense, and more difficult to be *commanded* by him than *restrained* by the Dramatist; he has not the absorbing fire of the latter—his nice and intuitive insight into human character perhaps, his elastic springs of feeling and of thought, that elevate or depress the sympathies as they may be plaintively or passionately touched, that "fine frenzy" that is caught from within, lighting up the temple where inspiration sits, and which, bursting in its fulness, imparts to the surrounding atmosphere of feeling, its electrifying influence. It is not a little singular to observe the disagreement between two able writers, relative to the operations of an art, with which it is to be supposed they are familiarly acquainted, having often employed their pens in its service. Mr. Campbell is of opinion, that the Poet seldom or never copies from living nature, but presents you with exemplars of ideal existence—Sir Walter Scott, on the contrary, remarks that the Poet is furnished with his materials rather by the study of actual life, than by the selecting powers of the imagination—when Mr. Campbell says, however, that some living personage has usually perhaps been made "the *rallying* point to the innumerable *original* traits of the fancy;" he makes a very just remark, and one which we think must settle all differences of opinion upon this subject.

had *human character* and *passion,* been first employed in place of those cold and *studied* beauties, those *abstract* speculations, and pompous descriptions of external objects, which alone found countenance and credit upon the ancient stage—the *latter* would never have been allowed to *usurp* the *legitimate* claims of the *former,* to an exclusive reign and dominion. We will pursue an examination of the question a little further, by stating what we conceive to be the great distinction that obtains between *Epic* and *Dramatic* writing, in order to evince, that these descriptions of natural scenery, more properly belong to the former than to the latter, and this difference is found to consist in the circumstance that in the *former* the Poet speaks alone; whereas, in the latter, he *disappears* altogether, which is in the highest degree favourable to such descriptions. They therefore more naturally occur in Epic than in Dramatic Poetry, that is, in *Tragedy;* for in the *lighter* or more unimpassioned pieces of the stage, such for instance as many of Shakspeare's *Historical* plays, in which there is little *passion,* taking that word in its *strictest* sense, and consequently little to *rivet* the attention—where there are few appeals to the *affections,* the work must address itself more or less to the imagination, according to the nature of the plot and connection of the story: in works of this *mixed* character, and in the Epic, where the Poet more frequently exhibits himself as one of the per-

sons of the Drama—where *he individually* describes things and persons, we may *consistently* look for *episodes*, abstract moralizing philosophical reflections, and rural descriptions; for without *these*, the Poet would be at a *stand*, as he seldom if ever brings the *passions* into play—conflicting and mingling in their stormy elements, to lighten and to thunder before the nakedness and tender susceptibility of our roused and enlisted sympathies, he must have recourse to his imagination, which, if it be stored with rich imagery, and classic recollections and allusions, cannot fail of dappling with its "gorgeous palaces, and cloud-capt towers;" but these splendid decorations of the *fancy*, seldom affect the heart—when introduced therefore into Tragedy, where terror, love, and pity are the soft and thrilling chords to be touched—where human *character* and *passion* are represented as struggling with the chains of despotism, the suggestions of ambition or revenge, the toils of treachery, the energies of disordered power, or the violation and the wreck of friendship and of love, if the creatures of the imagination be allowed to figure in pieces of this cast, its glories will appear like "stars, set on a *frosty* night," distinct, but *distant*—clear, but *cold*—in the Drama, men and manners may be said to represent and delineate themselves; no fictitious adornments should be allowed to arrest and captivate the fancy, at the expense of na-

ture, and in open contradiction to experience; one deep, warm, and consistent vein of feeling and of action should pervade the whole—the great difficulty attending this mode of composition, is found to lie in the art of *sustaining*, and the *keeping*, as 'tis termed, of character; the necessity of thus continually preserving in mind the peculiar traits and distinguishing characteristics with which the writer sets out, in supposing each of his characters to be endowed either by nature or by habit, from which their actions receive a tincture, and by which they themselves are recognised and estimated; the restrictions imposed upon the flights of the imagination, by this obligation of fulfilling the promises with which the author commences his work, and of strictly bearing in view the legitimate end of the Drama—this very maxim would seem to involve in its direction, a caution against all abstract speculation, frigid strains of declamatory sentiment, and moralising discourses upon external nature, and in the exclusion of *such* representations, is found to consist the principal *distinction*, found to obtain between Epic and Dramatic writing, as before remarked, between those works in which things are represented and narrated by the *Poet*, and those in which they may be said to act and speak *for* themselves—the Epic Poet suits his actions to his characters, and his characters to his actions; he varies his scenes as may best aid his efforts; in

the Epic a battle is described—in the Drama it is commonly brought before the eye—in the former the Poet is employed in full, and often pompous descriptions of character, in the latter it is made to develop itself; in the one, every thing is brought to conform to general ideas; in the other, to the known and established principles of our nature. Homer represents man as he might be supposed, Shakspeare as he is found to exist; though all poetic ideas be general, yet there is, perhaps, no mode of the poetical system more free from abstract representations of all kind, than the Dramatic; it is the opinion of the great Philosopher of the Grove, that Poetry is more captivating and philosophical than History—for this very reason, that the ideas of the one are general, while those of the other are individual and confined—Poetry presenting you with exemplars of general nature, History with copies or transcripts from individual life; the scenes and characters portrayed by the latter, necessarily pass away with the times in which they flourished; while those of the former, are as eternal as the source from which they spring. The Poet no doubt, may sometimes copy from individual experience, but probability being the standard of poetical invention, the persons and situations with which he makes us acquainted have become so much heightened and embellished, that we can seldom if ever trace an identity or even a re-

semblance between the beings of his *mind* and our *senses;* while at the same time, we readily assent to the rationality of supposing that some of his existences may once have had a "local habitation and a name:" for we naturally say, whatever *may possibly, has probably* existed; except indeed in cases where human character and external nature are represented as exhibiting a degree of perfection, to which we know from experience, that nothing sublunary can attain. Admiration is usually the feeling that attends our perusal of the pages of the Epic Poet, while our strongest and warmest affections are touched and called into play, by the deep and pathetic strains of the Tragic Muse: the gratification derived from the former, resolves itself into an abstract sentiment of the head; while the fervid gush of feeling wrung by the latter, springs directly from the heart—terror, love, and pity, are the links, which once touched by the kindling fire of the Poet, communicate to each succeeding link of that electric chain wherewith we are bound, the shock of their intense vibration, pervading and lighting up the soul with an absorbing and resistless sorcery. The heart, it has been well observed, judges more nicely than the imagination; to make impressions on the one therefore, requires more truth and power, than merely to hold forth to the other the splendid pageants of fictitious semblance. The Epic Poet deals almost ex-

clusively in fable—the Dramatic, comes nearer to our sympathies, and strikes home by representations which we *feel* to be founded more or less upon an experience derived from observations collected upon life—life, such as we sometimes *see* it, and believe it generally to be found—immense scope is thus afforded to the imagination of the former; he may indulge himself in the most detailed and luxurious descriptions of man and nature; while the latter, for reasons just assigned, has a far more arduous task devolving upon him—the fancy is caught and charmed by the brilliant creations of the one, its grottos, waterfalls, and gardens, while the heart must first *feel*, before it admit the claims of the other, to "unlock its source of sympathetic tears:" the denouments of the Epic plot, commonly turn upon the intervention of an agency, long since exploded in the Drama—the poetic license, while freely accorded to the former, is never now extended to the latter; this circumstance also creates a point of difference between the two species of writing, and evinces, we think, the greater difficulty connected with subjects of the Dramatic than the Epic Muse. We now come to the third and last question, which is not perhaps confined to the Drama alone, but applies to Poetry in general; whether some degree of obscurity be not only admissible in all the more serious creations of the Muse, but whether it doth not tend to *heighten* those

impressions which it is the business of the Poet to create—and here we cannot but agree with a late able writer upon the subject, that all obscurity is censurable which goes *beyond* that *expansion* and *elevation* of an image, which enables the imagination to conceive it *distinctly*, though not *determinately:* in this notion we find ourselves at variance with Dr. Blair, who seems to think that obscurity necessarily implies indistinctness, which, with all our deference for the opinions of that great critic, we certainly regard as extremely incorrect; in the very examples cited by the Doctor, we have a distinct but by no means a determinate idea of the object described: "I heard the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of *many waters*, and of mighty *thunderings*, saying Allelujah;" here the image immediately presented to the mind is sufficiently clear, while at the same time we cannot be said to have a *determinate* idea of the object itself, with which it is connected—of the Deity we are told, "he makes *darkness* his pavilion:" Milton describing the faded lustre of Satan, likens his appearance to the sun seen through "the misty air," or from behind the moon in "dim eclipse." The image which the Poet presents us with of *Death*, is as *indeterminate* as his *language*—"what *seem'd* his head, the *likeness* of a kingly crown had on;" in all these examples of sublime description conveying corresponding ideas, by *elevating*

the imagination with images, that it may enlarge and expand at pleasure—from their not being too minutely pressed upon the mind—in all these examples we say, there is much obscurity thrown around the objects described, though nothing of indistinctness—just leaving to the fancy sufficient scope for indulging its propensity, of amplifying its views and conceptions of objects in themselves grand and impressive, and this is all of obscurity it requires. Milton's Ode to the Nativity is full of wild, and sometimes obscure imagery—

> "The lonely mountains o'er,
> And the resounding shore,
> A voice of wail is heard, and loud lament."

The image of the different deities forsaking their several temples upon the approach of our Saviour, in loud and dismal lamentations, is in the highest degree sublime, wild and impressive; had the Poet entered into a *minute* and *circumstantial detail*, he would have rendered the idea tame and familiar, and consequently lessened, if not destroyed its mysterious solemnity. Thus then when we speak of obscurity in writing, nothing more is meant, than that the Poet should so *shadow* forth an image, as to allow *full play* to the imagination, and room for that expansion and elevation of its conceptions, in embracing the object described, which constitute the source of their sublimity;

we will extend these remarks a little further, by availing ourselves of the opportunity here presented of noticing some of the many strictures that have been more pompously than judiciously passed upon Burke's Enquiry into the Sources of the Sublime; however incorrect that great man may have been in much of his reasoning and many of his conclusions upon this subject, he certainly was not as much in the dark as he has been represented to have been: when for instance, he says, that darkness is one source of the sublime—he surely never meant to extend the remark as applying to *all* privations; his idea was, that every great image is necessarily attended with some degree of obscurity, which is correct, and darkness as connected with certain objects and associated with certain impressions, is certainly sublime: he never meant to assert that the mere absence of light, was in itself and alone a source of sublimity, which is simply a negation, and that therefore all and every degree of it, became a cause of the sublime—and that every image acquired sublimity in proportion as it was rendered obscure, or deprived of that distinctness, without which it is as impossible that the mind should conceive and embrace it, as that it should have an idea of the mere quality of darkness itself. Light is as much a privation as its contrary, and too much of the one becomes indistinct, as too much of the other becomes obscure: and it may be

said with equal truth, that an image set in too much light, is as imperfect as one deprived of all distinctness—"light ineffable" is obscurity, and such is the effulgent mystery which we are taught to believe mantles around the habitation of the Deity; in reply to those who affect to ridicule this notion of darkness being a source of sublimity by sagely remarking that upon the same principle, nonsense, which is privation of sense, must be equally a cause of the sublime—it may be said that there is such a thing as rendering an idea totally indefinite, by labouring to express it too clearly; it becomes lost, like the wit of Aristophanes, by being too pointed and refined; and yet, inasmuch as they ridicule the notion of darkness being sublime, they would seem to support the position that its contrary alone can become so, which would be equally false; so that these caviling critics are as mistaken in what their refutation of Burke's opinion would seem to imply, as he himself may have been in much that he has advanced upon the subject in dispute. The fact is, Burke meant no more when he declared privation to constitute sublimity, than that there was a certain degree of it which was sublime, even when unaccompanied by any object that might tend to heighten its effect; as for instance, that dubious twilight which lingers after sun-set, like the faded cheek of Love weeping at the shrine of Memory, for the days that are gone: this

light, which is sublime when deepened to a certain degree, becomes lost when surrounded by the shadows of collected night, sweeping into total obscurity, and therefore into nothingness, the peculiar feelings it before excited; thus then, we think it doth appear, that all objects clothed with that degree of obscurity which, while it enables the mind to form a sufficiently distinct idea of them to be interested in its operations, yet places them at such a distance as to invite its contemplation, are rendered in themselves sublime, and consequently that all images drawn from such objects, must necessarily possess a corresponding sublimity: and this is the true meaning of the word obscurity, in all its applications, whether made to refer to delineations of human character, or to images taken from the natural world. Upon this principle therefore, it were an easy task to defend from the charge of indistinctness and partial representation, some of the most splendid productions that genius has ever bequeathed to the sympathies of an ungrateful world—we say defend, inasmuch as that world, ignorant of the real sources whence the immortal mind of the Poet is ever found collecting its materials, never having worshipped at that shrine upon whose sacred purity, the prophetic spirit delights to mantle its choicest incense—never having drank at that fount, whence inspiration gathers in its holiest draught—in short, *essentially* defi-

cient in all those qualities and perceptions, upon the free exercise of which, must depend a thorough insight into the mysteries, and a relish for the beauties of imagination and of passion—the *mass* of mankind are ever found *prone* to *volunteer* their strictures upon the Poet, and to arraign him at the tribunal of their own narrow conceptions and unenlightened humanity, in all the exclusive *inveteracy* of *ignorance*, and in all the despotism of a partial and bigoted prepossession. It is a just remark of the great Author of the Intellectual System, that men are very apt to measure the extent of *all* power by that of their *own*—in allusion to those precious philosophers, if they deserve the name, who ever repose upon the "pillow of *doubt*," in cases where their limited understandings, cannot be brought to such conclusions as they require—in the same way with regard to *mind*, one man is ever disposed to judge of anothers capacity, by reference to his *own*, which he never fails of making the standard of *all* excellence—by that happy facility, for which we think folly alone conspicuous, of *accommodating* every thing to its own shortsightedness, by dismissing as *false* and *incorrect*, all that it cannot *comprehend*—and like the queen in Hamlet, are ever prone to "lay the flattering unction to their souls," that not their *ignorance*, but the *writers deficiency* is to blame. It is objected to the writings of lord Byron, that there

is too much *obscurity* in many of the *thoughts*, and not a *sufficient development* of characters and scenes, to impart that degree of interest which might otherwise be felt; Byron's genius which indeed "feels with the *ardour*, and debates with the *eloquence* of heaven"—possessed of the *power* with whose *energies*, as exhibited in his works *alone* we sympathise, was too great not to feel that in all the more *serious* fictions of the Muse, the *strongest* and *sublimest* impressions arise from that *consciousness*, which the mind possesses of the existence of *immence* and *undefined power*—whether *mental* or *physical*, in any *shape* or in any *mode;* it is *this feeling* which stamps its own gigantic and often melancholy impress upon all *his* creations—and it is with this we *sympathise;* it is in the *energies* of the various powers of the human soul, that we are interested, where the Poet is possessed of that genius which enables him to exhibit them at their *height*, and *fullest exertion;* and where *we*, from a corresponding *elevation* of mind, are capable of tracing their operations, and rendered susceptible of those feelings, which know how to *value* their *intrinsic* sublimity. Byron's powerful representations of the *intensity* and *devotedness* of passion, the wild and absorbing asperations after *abstract* glory and *ideal* happiness, which the *enthusiasm* of *genius* ever leads to, the struggles of *disordered* power, the depression and

recklessness consequent upon the disappointments of life, the goading horrors of a polluted conscience, the vindictiveness of hate, and the fiendish suggestions of revenge, all these various powers, so *fearfully* and *faithfully* sustained—carry with them the evidences of the most *overwhelming energy;* and it is this energy whose potency we are *forced* to acknowledge, even when exhibited under the most terrific aspect. His characters may be said to be *personified energies,* and not *pictures,* such as we are presented with in all lighter representations of life—with their *full drapery,* their *lights* and *shades* and various accompaniments. In Byron it is *one intense* and *collected feeling*—all *might* and *compression*: the mind is not allowed a moments pause in the ardent impetuosity and irresistible fascination, with which it is propeled, by which its very existence becomes riveted in all that it is presented with, which impresses upon the heart the traces of its own supremacy, and which encircles the memory with the Amaranth of its divine remembrances: the images of all the *sterner passions,* and deeper and *lovelier affections* of the soul, which he never fails to create, and which acquire a more *decided severity,* and imbibe a wilder and more luxurious magic from the many coloured world of his conceptions—these rays of immortality, come gliding in their own soft and solemn influences upon the heart, breathing around the freshness of their star-light dews

and warming and brightening its source, long after their sun of glory has withdrawn its *immediate* effulgence: and it is in return for the luxury of these divine visitations, that we associate with the Muse of Byron, all that is grand and elevated in enthusiasm, pure and eloquent in passion, generous in ambition, and sublime in those aspirations after glory, that "repose upon the pinnacles of earth, and mingle with the lightenings of Heaven." With regard to another objection that there is too much *monotony* in his representations of *character*, we would remark that the *abstract* conceptions of man and nature, which are embodied in his works, are as *true* and *eternal* as the *fundamental principles* of our *Religion*—and we might as well complain of the dull *uniformity*, of the conclusions inferred from these premises, as censure *those* delineations of human life, which are founded in the *immutable constitution* of our being: so much is he the Poet of suffering humanity, that his representations are never wanting in the *deepest* and most *painful* interest; admitted that *many* of his characters, are but *new* modifications of the *same* elements, what then? Is not *Tragedy* conversant with but *one* set of passions? Condemn the *repeated* use of these, and *what* is left the Drama? Would you substitute in the place of *Terror*, *Love*, and *Pity*—*Smiles*, *Wit*, and *Mirth?* Are we tired of the *Sun*, because he is for ever with us? Sometimes indeed in darkness as well as light, but still the

same eternal Sun. The *reply* to *these* questions we must think, will go to acquit Byron of the charge preferred against him; he may make Love, Ambition, Revenge, each the theme of two or more efforts of his Muse—but in doing so, his object is, to evince the *different* effects produced upon *opposite natures*, by the action of the same agent—and such is the power of his genius, that his several characters, however represented as swayed and marked each by *similar* passions, are yet stamped with their *own peculiar* individuality, and *identified* with *themselves alone:* he brings his *collected* energies to bear upon one point, the *effect* produced is *necessarily* overwhelming: *vast* power *concentrated* and *absorbed* within itself, in order to a more *vigorous* display, presents to the mind an image of *real greatness*: the impression left with us upon closing the pages of Byron, of the *might* and *majesty* of the affections, is one so *deep* and *fascinating* as for ever to remain fresh upon the heart; *rich* and *potent*, never waxing *weak* or out of date, but rather *continually* upon the *increase:* and what *more* do we ask or can we require of the Poet, than that his exertion should by be *such*, as by awakening, to keep *alive* those energies and affections of the soul, that are ever prone to lull themselves into inaction? And has not the Muse of Byron, been *singularly* and *signally* triumphant in this achievement? But thus it is, "let Hercules do what he may."

In the number of those who have objected to the works of Lord Byron, *Professor Drone*, we think, stands *conspicuous*. This illustrious Greek, no less celebrated for the *moral* excellencies of his character, than for the *clear* and *original* perceptions of his mind, has, with motives which cannot be too highly appreciated, set his face against the writings of this corrupted nobleman; and had it not been for the very just sentence passed by him upon that most wretched effusion of madness and impiety, which, assuming the name, has done violence to the memory of one of the most virtuous of the Italian princes of the sixteenth century, *Manfredi* the *Second*—perhaps an instance of the vilest union of immorality and nonsense, that ever appeared in the shape of a book, being not only *countenanced*, but allowed, by a something little short of the most deplorable *halucination* of mind, to captivate the senses of a *whole* world, at the most enlightened period of its history—we say, had it not been for the laudable exertions of Professor Drone, in *reprobating* the dark tendencies of this work, the encouragement which would otherwise have most infallibly attended it, must have afforded an instance of mental and moral *perversion*, which could not have failed to reflect eternal discredit, if not disgrace, upon the age in which we live. We confess, that with all the partiality we have hitherto evinced even for the *errors* of his Lordship's genius, our admiration of his talents has been *consider-*

ably lessened, by virtue of the *lucid* and *incontrovertible* arguments of this upright Roman, which have succeeded, we believe, in pointing out to the blind infatuation of the times, but too favourable to every thing which carries with it an appearance of *novelty* and revolutionary innovation—the absurd pretences to poetical inspiration, which the abovementioned volume would hold forth, and the still more wretched attempts at introducing and establishing a hideous and brutalising philosophy, which, like an oppressive night-mare, would only tend to torture our moral frame of being. We *had* been disposed, in charity to the failings of a man whose genius we had been accustomed to regard as at once *sublime* and *original*, to pass over and forget the many terrible confessions of moral pollution that disfigure his pages, closing upon them like a dark curse, whose seal, no other than the unhallowed hand of the Infidel could dare disturb—and to make some allowances for the strange wanderings and miserable perversion of a mind, sickened and embittered, from having been doomed to drink but too deeply of "the ingredients of the poisoned chalice," prepared for him by fate, and drugged with deadlier venom by the treachery of those incarnate fiends, who, making a pandemonium of his home, rioted in hideous mockery over the melancholy victim of their hellish arts—yes, we had been inclined from feelings of humanity, to regard his Lordship as "a man more sinned

against than sinning;" but alas! the fairy fabric of our poetic visions, based upon the Iris of Elysian dreams, has fallen and crumbled into fragments, blasted by the stroke of the enchanters wand—Professor Drone, "full of the magic of exploded science," stalks in triumph over the wrecks and spoils of this vanquished pretender to an exclusive dominion in the realms of necromantic fancy, and adorned with the trophies of his victory, looks contemptuously down upon the defeated efforts of this specious *usurper*, who was gradually ascending to the throne of that empire, over whose interests and honour, the Professor presides in guardian watchfulness. This great man has proved himself in many instances, strongly *attached* and highly *serviceable*, to the cause both of Literature and Morals; and the very splendid success which has attended his exertions in overthrowing the pillar of that reputation, in which the dark and designing spirit of Byron delighted to exult, is perhaps the *least* of his many glorious efforts; it is his occupation and his pride, "to teach the young idea how to grow;" and the surprising *new lights* which his original genius has lately diffused around the science of *education*, has been *such*, as to shed around his name the halo of an *imperishable* glory; and when the world shall speak of the merits of Professor Drone, they will long have forgotten the memories of such *retenders* to Science as Bacon, Locke and Beattie.

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